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VILLAGE EDITION

FEB'24

Style.

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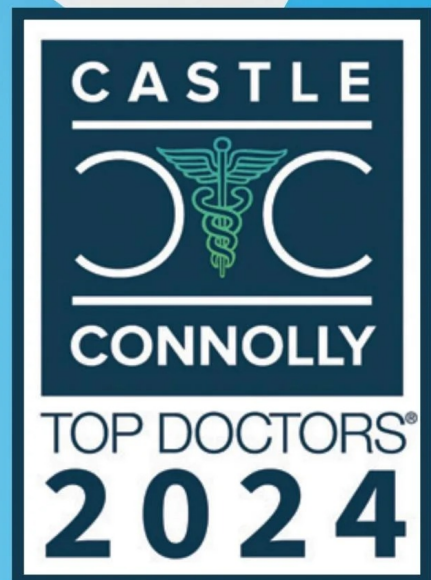
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FEB'25

V.21 N.04

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Victory Garden feeds bodies,
minds, and hearts in Tavares.

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A traveling garden inspiring
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Exploring community gardens and
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Biz Buzz

Spotlighting the passion,
entrepreneurship and impact of
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SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

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Leading the charge

Baseball Coach Tanner Clark shapes
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STORY: CYNTHIA MCFARLAND

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ON THE
COVER



Lake & Sumter Style

Design: Shawnee Coppola
On the Cover: Gardening
in the Community



Village Edition

Design: Travis Hajenga
Photo: Nicole Hamel
On the Cover: Dr. Serra of Central
Florida Plastic Surgery



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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Sowing Seeds

We're getting dirty! Can you dig it?

This month, we're reconnecting with our roots—literally! We're turning our attention to gardening and the farm-to-table lifestyle. It's the perfect way to kick off a fresh and meaningful chapter after celebrating 20 incredible years of serving this community.

While I'll admit I'm no seasoned gardener, I've heard that getting your hands in the soil is a wonderfully grounding experience (pun intended!).

On the practical side, rising food costs have moved many in our community to grow their own fruits and vegetables—a rewarding movement that's inspiring to watch unfold.

This month's issue is brimming with tips and insights to help you get started, whether you're a first-time gardener or have a green thumb.

Outside the garden, we're proud to highlight incredible local businesses that make this community special. Our profiles showcase their unique offerings, their dedication, and why supporting them matters. It's our way of celebrating the entrepreneurial spirit that defines our area. Be sure to

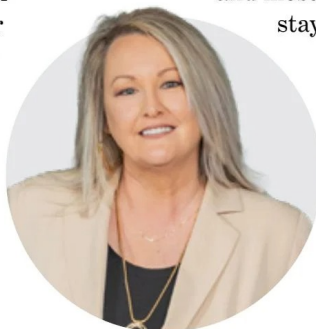
explore these features and discover some hidden gems!

Looking ahead, we're thrilled about next month's Homes Issue. We'll take you inside the world of Lake & Sumter's 2025 Realtor of the Year and offer tips on home buying, remodeling, and building. It's packed with value, inspiration and exclusive local insights you won't want to miss.

As we continue into 2025, our goal remains the same—to celebrate the resilience, creativity, and passion of our readers. Whether you're trying your hand at gardening, supporting local businesses or simply flipping through our pages with your morning coffee, know you're part of something bigger. A family. A vibrant, thriving community that **Style Magazine** is proud to call home.

Your ideas and feedback mean the world to us, so please don't hesitate to share! We love hearing about your stories, your successes and your questions. Together, we'll make 2025 a year to remember.

Stay curious, stay inspired, and most importantly, stay connected.



Sincerely,

Kendra

Have a story to tell?

We're always looking for stories about people who live and work in our area. Send suggestions to editorial@akersmediagroup.com.

style

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Why Screen?

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Through early detection, screening can make cancers easier to treat and help reduce cancer deaths. Cancer screening is done when you have no symptoms. Symptoms mean that cancer may have grown, spread, and be harder to treat.

Cancer screening includes:

- **Physical exam and history.** A physical exam can check for lumps or anything that seems unusual. A history of your health habits, past illnesses, and treatments can also gauge your risk.
- **Laboratory tests.** Procedures can include taking samples of tissue, blood, urine, or other bodily substances.

- **Imaging procedures.** Computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), ultrasound, and other machines scan areas inside the body for anything unusual.

- **Genetic tests.** Cells or tissue are analyzed to look for changes in genes or chromosomes, which may indicate a specific disease or risk.

Tests include mammography for breast cancer, Pap test for cervical cancer, colonoscopy for colorectal cancer, low-dose CT scan for lung cancer, PSA test for prostate cancer, and more. Additional tests may occur if a result is abnormal. For example, a screening mammogram may find a breast lump, but a diagnostic test like a biopsy will tell whether that lump is cancer. A test recommendation by your health care provider doesn't necessarily mean cancer is suspected. Some procedures have risks as well as benefits, so talk to your doctor to see what's right for you.

What Puts You at Risk for Cancer?

According to the National Cancer Institute, the most-studied known or suspected factors for cancer risk are:

- **Advancing age** (the most important risk factor for cancer overall and for many cancer types)
 - **Alcohol consumption** (mouth, throat, esophagus, larynx, liver, and breast cancer risk)
 - **Environmental exposures** to cancer-causing substances
 - **Chronic inflammation** through cancer-associated DNA damage
 - **Certain foods**, like red and processed meat (colorectal cancer risk)
 - **Hormone exposure** for a long time and/or to high levels of estrogen and progesterone (breast cancer risk)
 - **Immunosuppressive diseases** like HIV/AIDS, and drugs that suppress the immune system
 - **Infectious agents** like some viruses, bacteria, and parasites
 - **Obesity** (breast in post-menopausal women, colon, rectum, endometrium, esophagus, kidney, pancreas, and gallbladder cancer risk)
 - **Ionizing radiation**, including radon, X-rays, gamma rays, and other forms of high-energy radiation, through cancer-associated DNA damage
 - **Sunlight** and exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation (skin cancer risk)
 - **Tobacco use**, linked to the development of 17 different types of cancer in addition to lung cancer
- RBOI's licensed clinical social workers can help you with free programs in smoking cessation and stress reduction, and can help you access screening. Give us a call.*

by the numbers

2 mil

Americans estimated to be diagnosed with cancer (other than non-melanoma skin cancer) during 2024

more than 40%

Cancer cases attributable to preventable causes, like smoking, obesity, excessive sun exposure, etc.

3 out of 10

Cancer deaths caused by cigarette smoking

more than 46,000

Cancer cases that could be avoided by engaging in regular physical activity at levels recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Mark Your Calendars!

Our **virtual book club**, free for people diagnosed with cancer within the past two years, features *Picking Up the Pieces: Moving Forward After Surviving Cancer* by Sherri Magee, PH.D. and Kathy Scalzo, M.S. O.D. This program helps participants develop a healing plan after cancer and uncover the life they wish to create. We'll meet via Zoom on Tuesdays, 9-10 a.m. for 6 weeks, beginning February 4. Pre-registration is required. Call Amy Roberts at 352-732-0277 or email aroberts@rboi.com.



The Nature Coast Cancer

Crusaders will hold its fourth annual "It's All About The Cause" Mini Cancer Walk on February 22, 3-8 p.m. The organization supports the Citrus Aid Cancer Foundation and Citrus Colorectal Cancer Foundation, which help fund cancer patients and their families. See <https://naturecoastcancer crusaders.org/> for more information.

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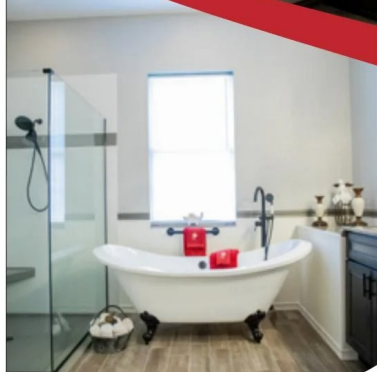
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OUTSTANDING STUDENT PG

Meet Blaine Crowder and
his French Bulldog Johnny:
A standout pair in the
competitive dog show arena.

24



**CELEBRATE SOUTH LAKE:**

On Saturday, February 8, from 12pm to 9pm, head to Victory Pointe Park in Clermont for the inaugural Citrus Champs Carnival. This vibrant event honors South Lake's citrus grove roots while embracing its modern charm and diverse community. Enjoy a full day of family fun with delectable foods, exotic drinks and high-quality cultural "carnival-style" entertainment. Come for the memories and plan on staying for the celebration of South Lake's rich history and bright future.



NO-NO FOR FIDO: Chocolate may be the top gift for your sweetheart but keep it away

from your precious pooch. The Animal Health Foundation warns that chocolate contains theobromine and caffeine, which are toxic to dogs. Even one ounce of milk chocolate per pound of a dog's body weight can be lethal. Symptoms of poisoning include rapid heart rate, agitation, tremors and seizures. If your dog eats chocolate, contact an emergency veterinarian immediately or call the ASPCA.

ANIMAL POISON CONTROL HOTLINE

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GO TEAM: The Eustis High School Athletic Boosters will host the 2nd Annual Panther Pride in the Park on Saturday, February 15, from 6 to 9pm at the Eustis Community Center. Enjoy dinner, entertainment, a cash bar, silent raffles and a reverse drawing. Tickets are \$75 per couple, \$325 to sponsor an eight-top table and \$400 for a 10-top table. The grand prize is an E-bike. Bring family and friends for live music and fun!

EUSTIS COMMUNITY CENTER

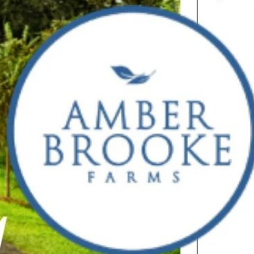
601 Northshore Dr., Eustis / 352.638.4425



FARM FRESH AIR: Amber Brooke Farms in Eustis and Advent Health Waterman have teamed up to offer a 1.17-mile walking trail, surrounded by the farm's year-round bounty. In February, visitors can enjoy sunflowers, zinnias, and strawberries, plus weekend family fun with a cow train, jump pads, ball zone, and more. The farm is also available for private events, field trips, and birthday parties.

AMBER BROOKE FARMS36111 N. CR 44A, Eustis / amberbrookefarms.com**DID YOU KNOW:**

In the 1800s, the main industries in Lake County were cotton and cattle breeding until citrus was introduced in the late 19th century. In 1894 and '95, back-to-back freezes destroyed crops and citrus, forcing many people to leave the county and find jobs elsewhere.



6



PRACTICING PERSISTENCE:

Born in 1906 in Okahumpka, Virgil Darnell Hawkins was an African-American educator and attorney who fought for admission to the University of Florida School of Law after being denied due to his race. After years of persistence, the state agreed to desegregate the law school if Hawkins withdrew his application. That sacrifice is said to have paved the way for others to attend UF Law and a monument now stands near the Post Office at the intersection of State Roads 33 and 48.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Lake County Schools recently congratulated its 2024-'25 Art in the Capitol winner, Feymar DeJesus Garcia, a seventh-grade student at Aurelia M. Cole Academy. Her piece, Ladybug on a Leaf, was chosen from a field of 17 works of art submitted by Lake County middle school students. Her winning artwork—which represents Florida State Senate District 13, domain of Senator Keith Truenow—will be displayed at the state capitol in Tallahassee for the duration of the legislative session. 📸



BARBECUE WITH A SIDE OF HONOR:

Mission BBQ has arrived in Clermont. It opened to the public in December at 1225 E. Hwy. 50 (next to Portillo's) with a blend of delicious barbecue and a deep sense of patriotism. Founded on September 11, 2011 by two friends passionate about BBQ and honoring America's heroes, Mission BBQ supports soldiers, police, firefighters and first responders. Each day at lunchtime, the restaurant pauses to salute the Stars and Stripes.

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FIGHT BACK: February is National Cancer Prevention Month, so designated to raise awareness about reducing cancer risk through lifestyle changes. Nearly 1.9 million people are diagnosed with cancer annually in the U.S., with over 40 percent of cases linked to preventable causes. To lower your risk, focus on exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, eating well, quitting smoking and limiting alcohol. Regular checkups and understanding your risk factors are also important. Use #CancerPreventionMonth to support research and encourage loved ones to take action for a healthier future.

GARDENING GOALS: The University of Florida IFAS Extension offers a monthly guide to help Florida gardeners with planting and maintenance. The UF/IFAS Florida gardening calendars provide expert advice for North, Central and South Florida. February's guide highlights Florida-friendly vegetables for various climate zones. For more tips, visit www.sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu for gardening series, plant of the month features, and helpful infographics.



PEOPLE

Beverly Steele

Local philanthropist fights to protect historic African American community.

STORY: CINDY PETERSON × PHOTO: NICOLE HAMEL

VITAL STATS

- Grew up in historic community of Royal
- Founded Young Performing Artists organization
- Established Royal's Historical Enrichment & Art Program

NATIONAL
PHILANTHROPIC
AWARD
WINNER

My inspiration: Royal is Florida's Oldest African-American community and one of only two African-American communities in the nation that was formed at the end of the Civil War. My family, the Andersons, were one of the founding families. Today, I am inspired by the community's elders and seniors as my mother, the late Evangelist Flossie Sesler and Mr. Maitland Keiler, 91, Royal's most prominent community activist. They taught me to never put my hand out to receive unless there's something in my hand to give.

Most don't know that: I am a fabric artist and a dancer as well as a businessperson. As a fabric artist, I learned that a print on a piece of fabric can make you smile and think, as well as depict culture and heritage.

The younger generation needs to know: How important it is for them to recognize the achievements and challenges of history, culture, and the history makers, like Mr. Maitland Keiler, who paved the way for the freedoms of the experiences that younger generations can now enjoy. Our younger generation has become 'the instant culture' because of social media and other societal identifiers.

What success looks like: We have a young dancer alumnus who starred in Broadway's last season of The Lion King, an enrichment

and historical programs alumnus who is a banker, and a young musician alumnus who won a Dove Award as Hip Hop Gospel Artist of the Year. For Royal, it will be impactful when it is recognized as historic at the local, state and national levels.

Most rewarding moment: Out of graduating with honors at all levels, becoming a New York City corporate manager who handled a \$10 million department before the age of 30, business consulting for 36 years and a not-for-profit founder for 26 years; caring for my mom, who was 102 when she died last Thanksgiving, is and will be my most rewarding moment.

Best advice: Stand the test of time and put hope in God.

Hopes for the future: My hope for Royal's future is to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places with recognition of its historic 3,500+ acreage boundaries, achieving national significance and the continuation of recording and preserving its rich history. For my organization, I want to continue using the arts as a catalyst for enriching and empowering. 📌



Know a person of interest? Tell us! → Email your recommendation to cindy@akersmediagroup.com.



CINDY PETERSON



Top Left to Bottom Right:

Luis G. León-Alvarado, MD; S.K. Steven Houston III, MD, FASRS; Thalmon R. Campagnoli, MD;
Thomas A. Barnard, MD; Jaya B. Kumar, MD, FASRS; Nisarg P. Joshi, MD;
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PEOPLE

BLAINE CROWDER

Groveland teen and French bulldog Johnny awarded National Junior Top 20 Titles.

STORY: CINDY PETERSON × PHOTO: NICOLE HAMEL

VITAL
STATS

- 15 years old
- Completed 100+ shows in 2024
- Qualified for Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show
- Homeschooled

How it began: I got into dog showing through my grandmother, who has been showing dogs for over 40 years, primarily Old English Mastiffs.

Where I've shown: I have shown in several places across the country, including Queens, New York for Westminster; Louisville, Kentucky; Doswell, Virginia; Greenville, South Carolina; Greensboro, North Carolina; Mobile, Alabama; and Perry, Georgia.

Some of my greatest accomplishments include: Being a top-placing Junior in the country. During my first year at Westminster, I competed in Best of Breed and received an Award of Merit against some of the top handlers and French Bulldogs in the nation. I've also qualified for the next Westminster in February at Madison Square Garden.

I look up to: My grandmother, who I consider my role model. She was going to retire but I decided I wanted to take over for her and continue her legacy.

Future goals: I'd like to become the No. 1 Junior until I age out, and then continue my dog show career as a professional top handler.

I love what I do because: I get to meet new people training and showing different breeds, travel the country and experience things that not everyone gets the chance to experience.

Fun Fact: Kroger contacted me and let me pick a charity of my choice to donate pallets of dog and cat food to. I chose The Animal League in Groveland and they donated them in my honor.

My first show took place: In Elkton during 2022 and I took two points, which in dog showing is incredible for a first time. After that, I wanted to continue showing because I enjoyed the competition.

When I'm not showing: I enjoy fishing in my free time.

My message to the world: Just be kind. 🐾

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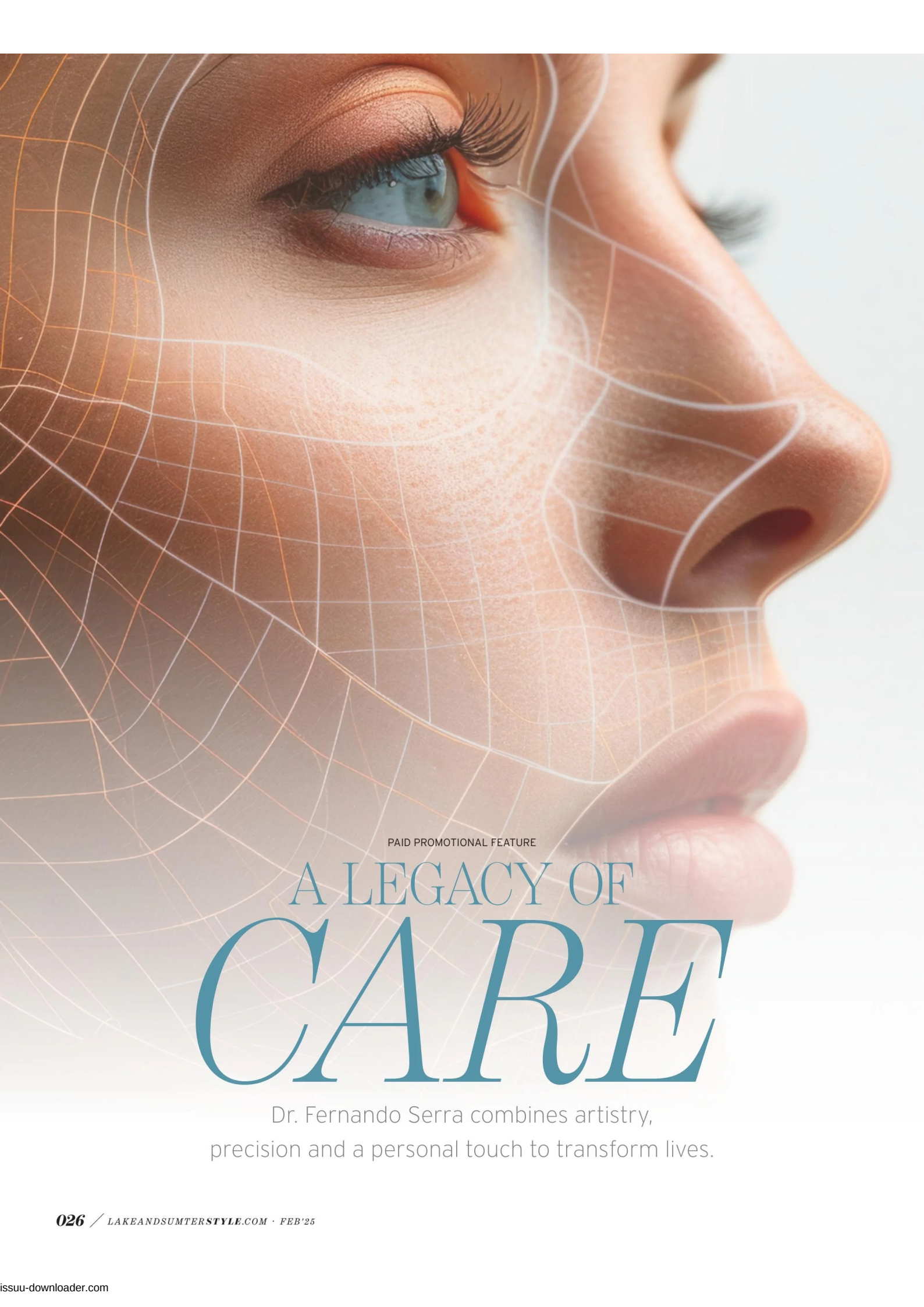
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PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

A LEGACY OF *CARE*

Dr. Fernando Serra combines artistry,
precision and a personal touch to transform lives.

With a career spanning nearly three decades, respected board-certified plastic surgeon Dr. Fernando G. Serra has been transforming lives and restoring confidence. With deep roots in Central Florida, his practice, Central Florida Plastic Surgery, reflects his dedication to meticulous care, personalized attention, and advanced surgical techniques. From his childhood in Bushnell to becoming a leader in aesthetic surgery, Dr. Serra's journey is a testament to his passion for helping others.

Early Inspiration and Education

Born in Easton, Pennsylvania, and raised in Bushnell, Florida, since the age of five, Dr. Serra found inspiration early in life through his father, Dr. Gene Serra, a retired general surgeon.

"I accompanied my father during hospital rounds on the weekends and helped out in his office. He was a general surgeon in Leesburg in the seventies and eighties," Dr. Serra recalls. "At a relatively young age, I already knew that I wanted to be a physician."

As valedictorian of South Sumter High School's class of 1985, Dr. Serra's academic prowess set the stage for his future in medicine. He pursued his undergraduate and medical degrees at the University of Florida, participating in the prestigious Junior Honors Medical Program, an accelerated seven-year curriculum that combined a Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Medicine.

During this time, Dr. Serra was introduced to the field of plastic surgery through externships with Dr. Hal Bingham, then Chief of Plastic Surgery at the University of Florida.

"Plastic surgery was simply amazing—from cosmetic procedures to complex reconstructions, a

plastic surgeon could apply his surgical knowledge and skills to make a positive change in people's lives," he says.

Training and Professional Milestones

After earning his medical degree in 1992, Dr. Serra completed a rigorous six-year plastic surgery residency at The Ohio State University under the mentorship of Dr. Robert Ruberg, the program's chief.

"Ohio State was a wonderful place

"We work hard to ensure a positive patient experience from start to finish."

to train," he says. "We learned sound surgical fundamentals and cutting-edge techniques in plastic surgery. They taught us to be thorough and conscientious doctors."

In 1998, Dr. Serra returned to Central Florida to establish Central Florida Plastic Surgery, initially opening offices in Leesburg and The Villages.

"The tremendous growth in Central Florida was a wonderful opportunity for my new practice," he explains. "Plus, the weather is much nicer here than it was in Ohio!"

By 2011, the practice had found its permanent home at Lake Sumter Landing Professional Plaza, the heart of The Villages, where people come from all over Central Florida and beyond.

"Being at the same location for so many years makes a difference and word of mouth travels, so I have patients coming to see me, not just from The Villages and Central Florida, but from all over," Dr. Serra says. "I've been blessed."

A Boutique Practice with a Personal Touch

Over the years, Dr. Serra has maintained a small, close-knit

team consisting of Joy, his office manager and Rodlynn, his surgical first assistant and certified scrub tech (CST).

"It's just us three in the practice. We're kind of the 'A' team," he shares. "It's a very cozy, intimate setup that allows me to really get to know my patients and spend quality time with them, plus they all feel comfortable with my team because it's us they always see and talk with."

This boutique approach has been instrumental in creating a welcoming

and personalized experience for every patient.

"The art of plastic surgery is really about listening to patients, understanding their desires and goals and determining the best solutions to achieve those goals," Dr. Serra explains.

Comprehensive Services

Dr. Serra's practice has evolved from its initial focus on reconstructive cases to a primarily aesthetic practice.

"When I first started, I handled emergency room calls and reconstructive cases, such as breast reconstruction after mastectomy, skin cancer removal with

DR. SERRA'S CREDENTIALS AND MEMBERSHIPS:

- **Board-Certified:**
American Board of Plastic Surgery
- **Member:**
American Society of Plastic Surgeons, American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery
- **Fellow:**
American College of Surgeons
- **Surgical Privileges:**
Leesburg Regional Medical Center, Santa Fe Surgery Center



“Plastic surgery was simply amazing—from cosmetic procedures to complex reconstructions, a plastic surgeon could apply his surgical knowledge and skills to make a positive change in people’s lives.”

reconstruction and facial and hand trauma,” he says. “But over time, breast and body contouring cosmetic procedures became a significant part of my practice.”

“At this point of my practice, I’m also doing a lot of facial rejuvenation surgery as well and I seem to stay quite busy, especially with all the affluent baby boomers now here in Central Florida.”

Today, Central Florida Plastic Surgery offers a wide range of procedures, including, but not limited to:

- **Breast and Body Contouring:** Enhancing body proportions and restoring confidence.
- **Facial Rejuvenation:** Providing surgical and non-surgical solutions to maintain a youthful appearance.
- **Injectables and Minor Procedures:** Botox, fillers, and other minimally invasive treatments performed in-office.

For procedures requiring anesthesia, surgeries are conducted at the Santa Fe Surgery Center, a state-of-the-art facility located just minutes from his office.

“We work hard to ensure a positive patient experience from start to finish,” Dr. Serra says.

A Dedication to Excellence

Dr. Serra’s commitment to excellence extends beyond the operating room. He remains actively involved in continuing medical education to maintain his board certification and stay current with the latest advancements in plastic surgery. In September 2024, he was invited as a guest speaker at The



Ohio State University's plastic surgery symposium, where he presented cases and reconnected with his mentor, Dr. Ruberg.

"It was very exciting to represent myself, represent The Villages and represent plastic surgery," Dr. Serra says.

Beyond the Practice

Outside of his professional life, Dr. Serra enjoys spending time with his family, including his wife of 12 years, Teri, and a new grandchild in Ohio. He also has a passion for golf, martial arts and music. "I've been practicing martial arts for many years with my instructor, Ricky Adams, a ninth-degree black belt," he says.

As far as music goes, Dr. Serra plays guitar, the upright bass and sings harmonies in a band alongside singer Lou Barry; both performing regularly at various venues in Sumter and Citrus counties.

Enhancing Lives Through Care

Dr. Serra finds immense satisfaction in helping his patients achieve their goals.

"It's very rewarding to help people look on the outside the way they feel on the inside," he says, explaining that whether it's a small procedure like Botox or a more involved surgery, his goal is always to enhance his patients' confidence and well-being.

In addition to surgical offerings, Dr. Serra has incorporated advanced wellness technology into his practice, such as the TheraLight infrared bed.

"The TheraLight bed is somewhat of a game changer. It's all about well-being and anti-inflammation, especially for our post-operative patients," he explains.

Building a Legacy

Now in his 27th year of practice, Dr. Serra remains deeply grateful for the trust his patients have placed in him. "I've been blessed with a wonderful practice," he says. "Even though I'm now so established, I've stayed true to my roots as a small specialty boutique. I love The Villages and I'm proud to have been part of this community for so many years."

For those seeking transformative care with a personal touch, Dr. Serra's practice offers the perfect blend of expertise, innovation, and compassion. As he reflects on his career, his gratitude shines through.

"I feel like I'm at the prime of my career where I'm still young and healthy and immensely passionate about what I do," he says. "My years of experience really help me in terms of doing a good job for all my patients and ultimately, I feel that practicing plastic surgery is really an honor and a privilege."

Ready to enhance your confidence and appearance? Contact Central Florida Plastic Surgery to schedule your personalized consultation today.

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Fernando G. Serra

M.D. FACS

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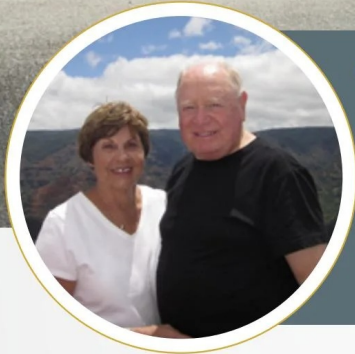
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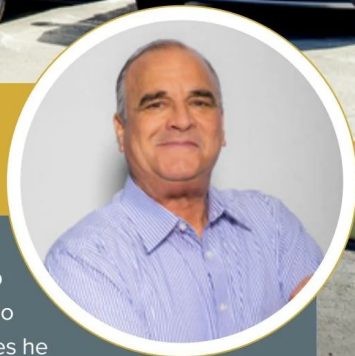
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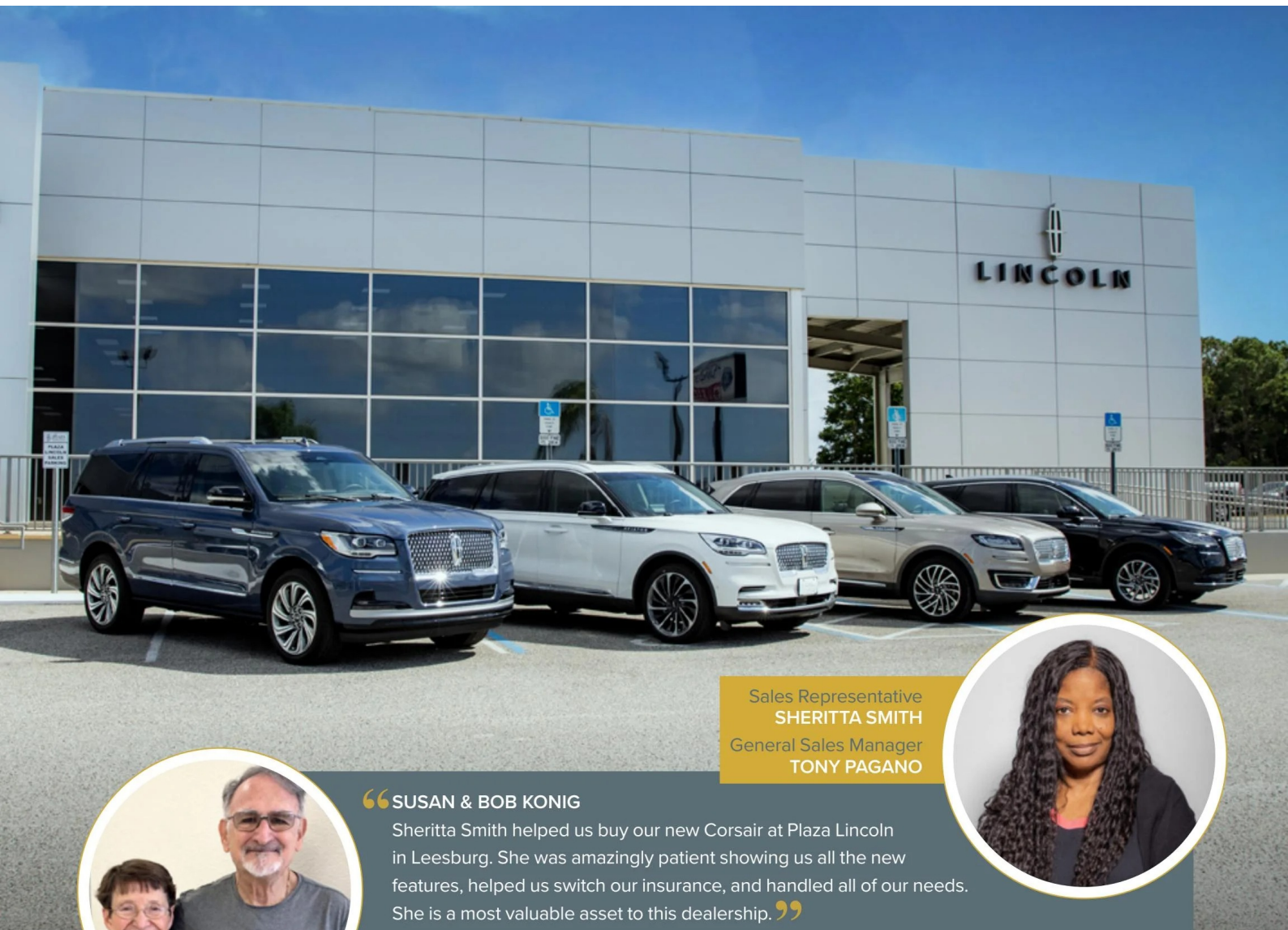
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Inspiration on Display

Parade of Homes Highlights Latest Trends and Innovations

STORY: CYNTHIA MCFARLAND
PHOTOS: PROVIDED

Americans love to be inspired. Ever since the original home improvement show “This Old House” debuted in 1979, dozens of shows have focused on building, remodeling, renovation, real estate, decorating and design.

Decades before people watched these episodes on television or online, they found ideas and inspiration in person at a Parade of Homes.

The nation’s first home tour of this sort was held in 1946 by the Salt

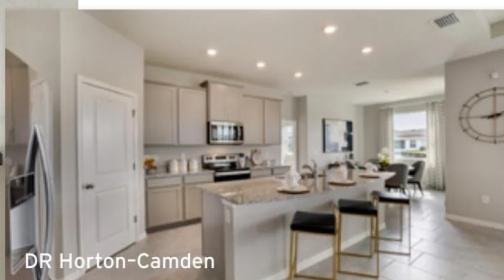
Lake Home Builders Association. In 1948, the Minnesota Builders Association organized a home show under the name Parade of Homes, and the concept took off in cities across the country.

Here in Central Florida, the Home Builders Association of Lake-Sumter (HBA-LS) showcases the industry’s best and brightest at the 2025 HBA-LS Parade of Homes, February 15-23.

The showcase provides a perfect opportunity to discover the latest trends and innovations of skilled tradesmen as you tour stunning homes constructed by area builders.



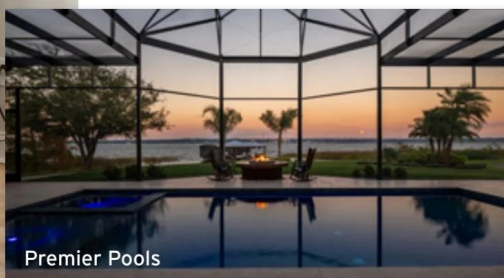
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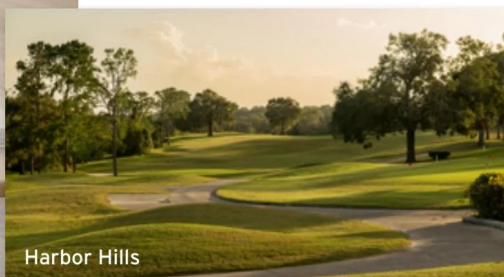
DR Horton-Camden



Lennar Independence



Premier Pools



Harbor Hills

AT PRESS TIME, THERE WERE ALREADY OVER 40 ENTRIES, WITH MORE BEING ADDED. IN ORDER TO HIGHLIGHT MORE OF THE TRADES INVOLVED IN THE HOME CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, SPECIAL CATEGORIES WAS EXPANDED TO INCLUDE:

- Kitchens
- Master baths
- Pools
- Landscaping
- She sheds/ Man caves
- Entertainment centers
- Docks
- Outdoor living

The expanded Special Categories exposes attendees to more options and possibilities. You may not be buying or building a home, but you'll find plenty of inspiration among the various entries if you're considering a kitchen or bath remodel, putting in a pool, or adding an entertainment area.

Harbor Hills is the Dream Community for this year's Parade of Homes. The park-like setting includes spectacular waterfront property on one of the county's largest freshwater lakes. The community is all about "endless possibilities for living well."

Located along the shores of Lake Griffin, this distinguished gated community features an 18-hole championship golf course, private marina, dock and boat ramp, restaurant, clubhouse, junior Olympic pool, fitness facility, pro shop, Har-Tru clay tennis courts and Har-Tru pickleball courts, and many other amenities.

The Reclinta model home in the Bella Vista section of Harbor Hills is one of the Parade entries.

Virtual entries

The Parade of Homes also includes virtual entries, which allows homes already occupied to be included in the event.

Virtual entry viewing days will take place at the REALTORS® Association of Lake and Sumter Counties (RALSC)

The HBA-LS was chartered in 1973, and their Parade of Homes has been a regular event for over 30 years. The association's last Parade of Homes took place in 2019. As in many other states, the pandemic derailed plans and took home tours off the calendar, so there is great enthusiasm for the upcoming event. Jennifer Pryor of the HBA-LS notes the plan is to again have the Parade of Homes every year.

"We're really excited to bring the Parade back. The response has been great. Builders are doing so much and have much more inventory now," Jennifer says.

So much to see

Variety is the spice of life—and of the Parade of Homes. Attendees can tour different types and styles of homes throughout Lake and Sumter counties.

PARADE ENTRIES ARE IN NUMEROUS CATEGORIES:

- Single family homes
- Multi-family homes
- Remodels
- Special categories
- Communities

office in Tavares on Saturday, February 15 and Saturday, February 22. Some of the builders of virtual entries will be on hand at the RALSC office to chat with attendees on those two viewing days.

“People can see more homes because of the virtual options. There will be links to websites so there’s an easy way to reach out with questions to the builders and subcontractors,” says Nick Smith of Trident Construction in Eustis, who has two virtual entries in this year’s Parade.

In addition to custom home builds, remodels and renovations, his company does marine construction. He has a custom home entered in the Parade, as well as a dock (Special Categories).

Nick, the incoming president of the HBA-LS, is enthusiastic about the association’s momentum as the housing industry continues to grow. “We’ve had a lot of participation in HBA-LS in recent years. The residential markets are flourishing here,” he notes.

This year’s event has attracted entrants who haven’t participated in past Parades. Among them is Philip Mastro Simone III, whose Leesburg-based company, Mastropiece, does projects for both residential and commercial spaces. The company specializes in custom home upgrades and millwork.

Philip explains that pieces are built and finished in the company’s large workshop, which limits inconvenience and construction debris in clients’ homes.

His company has four virtual entries in the Parade. He’s entered a kitchen and a bathroom in Remodels, along with an entertainment center and a man cave in the Special Categories section.

He’s proud of all four projects and especially excited for people to see the unique details included in the man cave. This includes hidden door bookcases that open into an unexpected tucked-away entertainment area, reminiscent of a speakeasy.



Mastro Simone Construction



Mastro Simone Construction

“I want to show people a high quality of next-level craftsmanship they can’t buy anywhere else. Everything is handcrafted and designed here,” Philip says.

Judging and awards

Before the Parade of Homes opens, all entries are judged by a panel of experts comprised of REALTORS®, engineers, interior decorators, etc.

Jennifer explains that the judging panel focuses on workmanship and construction, rather than décor, but attendees will appreciate the many decorating and design ideas. Homes are judged in price point categories, so a \$400,000 home isn’t judged against a million-dollar home.

JUDGES CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

- Exteriors
- Curb appeal

- Overall architecture design
- Landscaping
- Floor plan
- Room sizes
- Individual rooms and areas
- Overall quality of workmanship
- Quality of material used
- Perceived value

There are 1st and 2nd place awards in each category, as well as merit awards. Awards are displayed in the homes on the tour.

“Cecil Clark Chevrolet, one of our sponsors, will provide cars for our judges to be driven to the entry locations on judging day,” says Jennifer. “Judging takes place a week prior to the Parade’s opening so winners can proudly display the awards in their homes.”

Attn: Real estate pros

Real estate professionals are invited to experience the Parade of Homes entries the week before the event

opens to the public, thanks to REALTOR® Days Bus Tours.

INCLUDED IN THESE TOURS ARE PRODUCTION AND CUSTOM-BUILT HOMES IN SPECIFIC AREAS OF LAKE AND SUMTER COUNTIES:

- North: Fruitland Park, Lady Lake and Wildwood
- South: Groveland, Clermont, Montverde
- Central: Mount Dora, Leesburg, Tavares, Umatilla, Eustis

“The bus tours for REALTORS® are both educational and energizing. They provide agents with the opportunity to explore new communities and gather essential information to better educate their clients. These tours also offer the convenience of visiting multiple Parade communities in one day, making it a perfect blend of fact-finding and networking,” says Steve McDonald of the REALTORS® Association of Lake and Sumter Counties (RALSC).

REALTOR® Days Bus Tours take place Monday through Wednesday, February 10-12. To participate, real estate pros should reach out to HBA-LS to book a spot on the bus tours.

Steve says this is an ideal way for participants to explore different housing communities, learn about various floor plans, and see the latest trends in technology and design firsthand.

“Lots of REALTORS® do the tours and they even have their own awards, the REALTORS® Choice Award,” Jennifer says.

“This parade is highly anticipated as Central Florida continues to thrive, with housing starts serving as a key indicator of our growing economy. REALTORS® are encouraged to join the buses and explore the opportunities available for home buyers. The REALTORS® Association of Lake and Sumter Counties is proud to partner with the Home Builders Association and looks forward to many more Parades in the future,” Steve says.

Mark your calendar

Whether looking to buy or build, remodel or just gather ideas and inspiration, the Parade of Homes appeals to a wide variety of attendees.

“Consumers are more knowledgeable now,” says Jennifer, noting that home improvement shows have made the housing and construction industry more relatable to the average buyer and homeowner.

“YOU CAN SEE WHAT DIFFERENT BUILDERS ARE DOING AND WHAT’S NEW IN THE INDUSTRY. YOU CAN SEE AND FEEL FIXTURES AND FINISHES, WHICH ARE THINGS YOU CAN’T DO WHEN YOU’RE WATCHING A SHOW ON TV,” SHE ADDS.

Although tours are self-guided, builders and tradesmen are on site to answer questions. You can also gather information to review after the tour.

In the past, local newspapers printed a guide for the Parade of Homes, but times have changed. Now you simply visit the Parade website at www.lakesumterparadeofhomes.com. Click on the listing of each entry you want to tour, and the website provides a Google map for you to follow.

The 2025 HBA-LS Parade of Homes is all about discovering potential from the region’s top builders, architects, designers, and tradesmen.

You may be looking to buy or build a new home. Or perhaps you’re happy in your current home but thinking about remodeling a certain area. You may want to increase your options for enjoying the Central

Florida lifestyle by adding an outdoor entertainment area, dock or improving your landscaping.

Discover what’s trending and what’s new in the home building industry. You may just find your new home, and at the very least, you’ll walk away inspired and brimming with ideas. ☺

HBA Lake-Sumter
**PARADE
of HOMES
2025**

IMPORTANT DATES

Parade of Homes Schedule
Saturday, February 15 through
Sunday, February 23, 2025

*Homes are open 10am-5pm every
day except Sundays, when tour
hours are 12 noon-5pm.*

**Virtual Entry Viewing
Days at RALSC**
Saturday, February 15, 2025
Saturday, February 22, 2025

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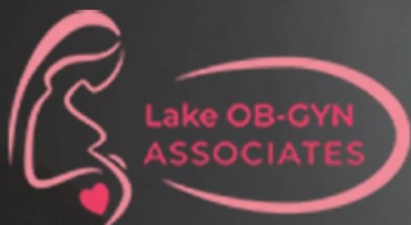
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ROOTED *and* GROWING

Victory Garden
benefits community
in tangible ways.

STORY: CYNTHIA MCFARLAND × PHOTOS: PROVIDED

Gardening became a patriotic mission during World Wars I and II. As America's farmers were tasked with supplying the troops, citizens were encouraged to do their part by growing produce at home. Posters urged people to "sow the seeds of victory" and "be a soldier of the soil."

Promoted as "victory," "war" and "liberty" gardens, the campaign was successful in fighting food shortages. By 1944, an estimated 20 million victory gardens were credited with producing 40% of the produce grown in America.

Fast forward to the 21st Century. The concept of stewarding natural resources appeals to a whole new generation. Just ask the folks behind the aptly named Victory Garden on the grounds of Faith Christian Fellowship in Tavares.

SETTING ROOTS

The garden's roots extend back to 2011 when Pastor Buddy Walker founded Empower School & Farm in Umatilla, a residential urban farm internship program to guide young leaders finding their purpose in Christian services while producing food through regenerative agriculture that protects the environment.

Walker started Victory Garden in March 2018 in conjunction with Lake Cares Food Pantry to benefit the local community by growing healthy food using natural fertilizers and pest control.

Walker, the president of Commissioned Beyond Borders, Inc., moved to Tennessee to launch another Empower School & Farm in Knoxville. June 1, 2024 marked the official

transition of Victory Garden as its own 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Victory Garden, which is dedicated to providing access to pesticide-free produce and teaching people to garden, is in the capable hands of director Caryn Desinor.

Unlike community gardens where participants rent plots and grow their own produce, Victory Garden is a one-acre urban farm that supports the community by offering affordable farmers markets, classes and workshops. Participants learn about gardening whether they have a yard or just an apartment balcony. All activities take place at the farm at Faith Christian Fellowship.

Victory Garden is divided into different sections. In the food forest, all plants (both edible and medicinal) are in the ground. The square garden features a growing grid with concrete

beds, while the greenhouse has dozens of hydroponic and aeroponic towers. The container garden includes a trellis system for plants that need support. In the shade section, standing wooden beds hold shade-friendly plants. There are plans to add a butterfly garden.

"We're not certified organic, but we use organic practices. There are no chemicals used and we're 100% pesticide free. We only use organic fertilizer and compost. If we add nutrients to the soil, it's natural and comes from volcanic rock," Caryn says.

Volunteers sign up for workdays to help with garden maintenance at the handicapped accessible garden with concrete beds of varying heights so people in a wheelchair or using a walker can participate.

LEARNING WORKSHOPS

Victory Garden regularly hosts fun and educational workshops. Adult workshops are for ages 13 and older. Separate workshops are offered for children aged 2-12.

"Since June 1, we have expanded to include more family-oriented events," says Caryn, who teaches many of the workshops, as does her husband, Ahkeem, logistics manager for the Lake Cares Food Pantry.

Kids workshops that encourage children to learn and ask questions are popular with moms.

In the "Painting with Petals" workshop, kids learned about the natural dyes in flower petals by pounding petals onto canvas totes they took home.

In other recent workshops, participants learned how to grow tomatoes, compost, create loose leaf tea blends and tinctures and flavor kombucha with herbs and berries.

Most workshops are free. If a kit is included, the fee is small, often just \$10 to \$15. And you won't leave empty handed.

"We always send participants home with produce or starter plants," adds Caryn.

FARMERS MARKET

Freshly harvested seasonal produce is sold at the farmers market on the first, third and fifth Wednesday each month from 8am to 1pm.

"We want to fight food insecurity with nutritious options, and provide access to good produce," Caryn says.

The market also sells ginger and turmeric, which are very popular. You'll find locally-sourced honey, loose leaf tea blends and specialty items such as artwork on occasion.

Starting this year, Victory Garden has an Adopt-a-School program to teach students in garden clubs.

"We're also partnering with local teachers and administrators in Lake County to develop and design an after-school program for students grades 3 to 5 to learn about healthy eating," Caryn says. "We're introducing them to nutrition and teaching them about growing produce and running their own farmers market. We plan to have a community cookout and produce a cookbook."

Come by the farmers market to stock up on produce and learn about multiple options for getting involved with Victory Garden, including signing up for a workshop or participating in a volunteer workday. 🌱



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GROWING *Success*

The Ellie Creigh way to start your garden right.

STORY: CINDY PETERSON

PHOTOS: CINDY PETERSON & PROVIDED

Ellie Creigh's journey into the world of plants began with a simple desire to grow food for her family. She never imagined that her love for gardening would become a thriving career and a source of inspiration for so many.

"I always loved the idea of having a garden, so I started as a hobby," Ellie says. "I wasn't very good at it, as I had no formal education, and by trade I was actually a hairstylist. It wasn't until I started going through some hard times that I really dove into gardening. That drive to feed me and my baby daughter at the time was the springboard that got me into this passion full force."

After years of growing her own food, Ellie was excited to share what she had learned – and grown – with her community. She began in 2019 by teaching people in their own back yard and helping them install gardens of their own.

However, in 2022 she wanted to expand her reach but didn't have a location. The solution came to her while she was driving around town.

"One day, I was looking for land when I got stuck behind a bunch of school





buses releasing children from school, and the idea hit me—a mobile classroom!” Ellie says.

The revelation led her to purchase a used school bus that she renovated with the help of a friend. The result was a fully functional mobile gardening hub appropriately named “The Growcery Store” that allows Ellie to travel, teach and sell her produce to the community.

“Now here we are today with the bus I use for vending my produce and educational classes,” she says.

Ellie’s passion for gardening is deeply rooted in her own learning experience by trial and error.

“I learned everything on my own from mostly Mother Nature herself, and though a great teacher, she charges a high tuition with the number of mistakes I made,” Ellie says.

Realizing how scarce local gardening resources were, she began offering advice to neighbors. The overwhelming response to

her knowledge convinced her to turn her passion into something more lucrative.

“Within a week, I decided to turn it into a business, and it became my full-time job,” she says.

Ellie offers a variety of services, including garden and fruit tree installations, private at-home gardening classes, group classes held on the bus, and the sale of starter plants for DIY gardeners.

Seeing others succeed in their gardening efforts is the most rewarding aspect of her work.

“I love seeing people being able to be self-sufficient and seeing the joy and excitement emanating off them when they see that they truly can grow food too,” she says.

Ellie is quick to point out that gardening is a learned skill, and that anyone can develop a green thumb with the right guidance.

Her advice for beginners is simple but critical: “Get set up right,”

“I LOVE SEEING PEOPLE BEING ABLE TO BE *self-sufficient* AND SEEING THE JOY AND EXCITEMENT EMANATING OFF THEM WHEN THEY SEE THAT THEY TRULY CAN GROW FOOD TOO.”

she says. “Do your research. Get the absolute best soil, make sure watering is consistent, it’s getting full sun, and you’re planting at the correct time of year for your area.”





EXPERT gardening TIPS

Ellie emphasizes the importance of soil preparation, especially in Florida, where sandy soil can pose challenges.

“Our soil here in Florida is mostly sand, so either the ground must be heavily amended with compost, or the crops need to be grown in raised beds,” she says.

Her top recommendation is to use 100% broken-down mushroom compost in a raised bed to ensure crops receive all the needed nutrients and micronutrients.

She also offers practical tips for garden planning. While there are online tools and apps available, Ellie encourages beginners to use graph paper to map out their garden, ensuring proper spacing and sunlight.

“Make sure you put all your tallest produce furthest north and your shortest produce south, as the sun tilts southward half the year,” she says.

For pest control, Ellie suggests planting in the correct season and focusing on plant health.

“If your plants are healthy, bugs typically won’t attack them as much. Bugs tend to go for sick or weak plants,” she says.

When infestations occur, she recommends using essential oil-based sprays as a natural solution.

Ellie also advocates for composting and highlights the convenience of electric composters.

“I personally use the Reencle brand composter, and it’s absolutely the best,” she says.

Her ultimate goal is simple yet profound: to empower others.

“Food growing is a learned skill, and with just a few key rules and a little time and effort, the results can be absolutely dazzling,” Ellie says. ☺



1 START WITH THE RIGHT Soil

Invest in high-quality soil. For Florida's sandy conditions, Ellie recommends using 100% broken-down mushroom compost in raised beds. If unavailable, mix dark loamy soil with nutrient-rich compost. Either heavily amend sandy ground soil with compost or plant in raised beds for optimal results. Good soil is the foundation of a successful garden.

2 PLANT THE RIGHT TIME of Year

Research your planting zone and seasons. Planting at the correct time ensures healthier plants and helps prevent pest problems.

3 Water CONSISTENTLY

Water for 10 minutes daily in warm seasons and every other day during cooler months. Adjust based on rainfall to avoid overwatering.

4 FOLLOW PLANT Spacing GUIDELINES

Pay attention to spacing requirements on seed packets to prevent overcrowding. Proper spacing allows plants to grow strong and healthy.

5 Weeding IS ESSENTIAL

Keep the garden clean and tidy to prevent weeds from overtaking and competing with your plants for nutrients.

6 PLAN YOUR Garden Layout

Use garden apps or graph paper to map out your garden. Place taller plants on the north side and shorter plants on the south side to ensure they all get enough sunlight.

BEST Beginner PLANTS

Start with easy-to-grow plants like:

- Radishes • Lettuce
- Bok choy • Tatsoi
- Kale
- Herbs like green onions, cilantro, parsley, and mint

NATURAL Pest Control

Healthy plants planted in the right season attract fewer pests. If infestations occur, Ellie recommends using essential oil-based natural sprays.

Composting TIPS

Research what can and cannot be composted. Electric composters, like the Reencle brand Ellie uses, break down food scraps in 24-48 hours, making them a great option for beginners.



BE PATIENT AND LEARN FROM Mistakes

Gardening is a skill that improves over time. Take the time to observe, experiment, and learn as you go.

Cool-SEASON CROPS (Fall/Winter Planting)

Planting Time: September through November

What to Plant:

- Leafy Greens: lettuce, spinach, kale, bok choy, Swiss chard
- Root Vegetables: radishes, carrots, turnips, beets
- Bud Vegetables: broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kohlrabi
- Herbs: cilantro, parsley, dill, peppermint, spearmint, lemon balm, rosemary

Warm-SEASON CROPS (Spring/Summer Planting)

Planting Time: February through March

What to Plant:

- Fruiting Crops: Tomatoes, peppers, eggplant
- Squash Family: zucchini, butternut, spaghetti squash
- Beans: bush beans, pole beans, summer long beans
- Melons: watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew
- Heat Tolerant Crops: okra, sweet potatoes, corn



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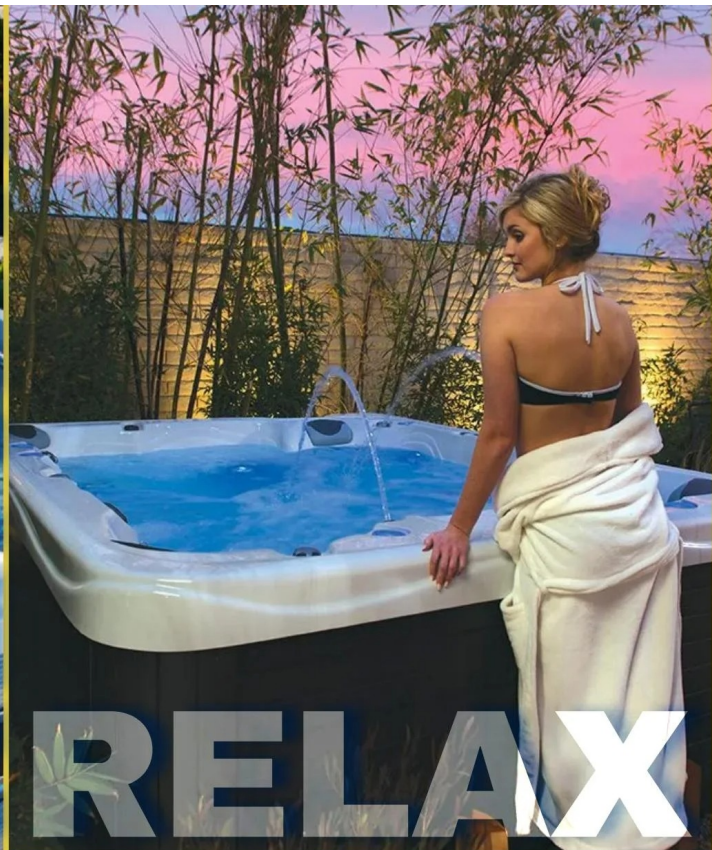
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Community gardens provide fresh produce, optimism and health benefits.

STORY: CYNTHIA MCFARLAND × PHOTOS: MATTHEW GAULIN

Grocery receipts don't lie. Prices for food and beverages are 22.33% higher than in 2020, which is one reason behind the increased popularity of community gardens. Simply put, your food dollar goes farther when you invest in a community garden. According to the USDA, community gardens yield approximately \$6 worth of

produce for every \$1 invested. Just 11 square feet in an average community garden yields approximately 20.4 servings of fresh produce.

And fresh fruits and vegetables are more flavorful.

Trying to convince your kids to eat more veggies? Data shows participants in community gardens eat 37.5% more fruits and vegetables than non-gardeners.

Still not sold on the benefits of a community garden? Consider this: Participating in a community garden lowers concerns about household food security while providing exercise and mental and physical health benefits. Research finds that community gardeners have lower BMIs and are less likely to be overweight than their neighbors.

Ready to turn some dirt? You don't have to go far: Central Florida residents have

multiple options when it comes to community gardens.

TEN YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG

The North Sumter County Community Garden, launched in 2014, has helped participants grow for a decade now.

The garden, conveniently located behind the United Church of Christ at The Villages in Oxford, consists of 45 raised beds, most measuring three feet by 10 feet. There are usually 20 to 25 gardeners each season.

Beds are offered September through August. Large plots are \$50 per year; while smaller plots run \$35 per year. The fee includes plot use and access to water from the church. Each gardener is responsible for watering their own plots. Gardeners sign a contract to participate in work days scheduled a few times each year.

"The church lets us use the land and they're on a well, so we pay the church



a fee of \$10 per plot for water use," says chief steward/master gardener Chris Janis.

Chris is one of several experienced gardeners who's happy to share advice with new participants on how to amend the soil and what to plant in the spring and fall growing seasons.

"There's something very special about putting in the effort and getting the veggies and produce," Chris says. "It can get very 'Zen' being outside, listening to the birds and hearing cow noises in the background. It's very peaceful and rewarding."

Visit the garden's Facebook page to learn more at facebook.com/nscgarden or call Chris directly at 617.750.3101.

NO-FEE ORGANIC GARDEN

The Harvest of Hope Community Garden at Community United Methodist Church in Fruitland Park opened as a community outreach project in 2019 on the same property as the church and its food pantry.

There are 24 four-by-eight-foot raised beds for growing veggies and flowers. Since no chemicals are allowed, all gardening is organic.

"The church provides the garden beds and water. It's up to each gardener to provide their seeds, plants and energy. There's no fee to use the garden plots; the only cost is what people buy in plants and seeds. It's a way to let people know God loves them and it's nice for us to get to know our neighbors," explains garden coordinator and church member Nancy Laraway, who has coordinated the garden since its inception.

Many people using the garden are food pantry clients. Some church members also have garden beds, but there's no requirement to attend the church to participate. Gardeners bring their own tools and are responsible for maintaining and watering their beds.

"It's fun for a family to have their kids see where the food comes from, and it's helpful for supplementing the food they purchase," says Nancy, adding that children are welcome with

adult supervision. "It's a fenced-in area, but gardeners can come anytime. There's a screened lanai area if you want to take a break in the shade."

Anyone interested in participating in the Harvest of Hope Community Garden should contact the church at 352.787.1829. <https://www.facebook.com/communitymcfp/>

GARDEN GROWN BY GRANT

The 2-year-old Clermont Community Garden came about through a National Recreation and Park Association contest on park and community space revitalization.

"The City of Clermont applied for a grant sponsored by Niagara Bottling for proposed sites throughout the U.S. and we were accepted as one of the candidates. It was decided by vote, and we won a \$90,000 grant," explains Suzanne O'Shea, manager of the Clermont Arts and Recreation Center.

The 1/3-acre garden became a reality in January 2023. It offers 29 raised

beds of varying sizes: three feet by six feet, three feet by eight feet and five feet by five feet. There's even a two-by-six-foot wheelchair accessible bed. In addition to the garden plots and hydroponic towers, participants enjoy a butterfly garden, walking trail and pergolas with shaded sitting areas. The garden is open dawn to dusk seven days a week.

Gardeners pay \$30 per bed for one year, January through December.

"It was absolutely amazing to get the grant funding to make this possible. We have a lot of new gardeners and people who don't have green space. We see it as a great opportunity for the community," Suzanne says. ☺

To inquire about 2025 openings, contact arcgarden@clermontfl.org or call 352.708.5998. www.clermontfl.gov/256/Clermont-Community-Garden

Find Central Florida gardens: www.foodforest-nursery.com/maps/community-garden-near-me/



North Sumter County Community Garden



Clermont Community Garden



Harvest of Hope Community Garden

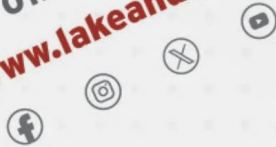


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Facilities are designed like a private room setting at a hospital with a large staging area and patient lounges. Once the patient checks in, they and any family member accompanying them stay in their individual room until the patient goes into the lab for their procedure.

This affords both comfort and privacy in a warm, safe, cozy environment.

Multiple large clinical studies have demonstrated that procedures performed at an OBL can be done with great outcomes and safety that mirrors that of excellent hospitals.

"This is an in-and-out facility, which offers the patient extreme convenience and comfort and reduces risk of infection due to the short stay. The majority of patients are only here for three to four

hours," says medical director David C. Lew, MD, FACC, FSCAI.

A highly respected interventional cardiologist, Dr. Lew founded OHMG FHV Health in 1991.

Dr. Lew notes that the OBLs are popular choices for diagnostic heart catheterizations and total body angiograms.

Cardiac patients can learn immediately what treatment is required, or if surgery or cardiac stents are necessary.

Vascular patients with severe claudication or advanced critical limb ischemia can be treated and receive interventions on-site.

Without a prolonged stay in a hospital, there is far less risk of hospital-acquired infection.

"The rate of infection is directly proportional to the length of stay," says Dr. Lew, "so the shorter the better."

Dr. Lew speaks as both a cardiologist who's performed over 30,000 cardiac and vascular procedures, and from firsthand experience, having been a patient at the Leesburg OBL last December.

"As the medical director of our OBL system, I have the utmost confidence in our facilities, the abilities of our great cardiologists, staff and safety, that I underwent a diagnostic heart procedure here," he says. "Thank God,

I was blessed with great news and went home two hours later."

Find out for yourself. If you're not having a major procedure or operation, the warm and welcoming environment of the OBL at OHMG FHV Health could be the most convenient and safe option.



DAVID C. LEW, MD, FACC, FSCAI

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With three franchises of the business currently in the Sunshine State, owner/operator Tyler Hyrons is a veteran plumber who is proud to serve Central Florida. Tyler and his business partner, Justin Cook, opened the Leesburg franchise in January 2024.

Having recently celebrated its one-year anniversary, the licensed plumbing business operates from Ocala to Orlando and all areas in

between. They cover every aspect of residential plumbing from new construction to remodels and repair. Light commercial services are also offered.

A Florida native who was raised in Plant City, Tyler moved to Leesburg in 2020 because of his fiancée, Emily, who was born and raised here.

When you call the company, you'll be dealing with Tyler himself, not a subcontractor. He's the one who will show up at your job to do the work.

"One of my favorite things about being a plumber is that I get to be an everyday hero," says Tyler. "I come in when the water is off or the toilet's not flushing, and I get to solve the problem. What I find most satisfying is being able to help people by figuring out the problem and fixing it for them."

From installing, repairing and maintaining fixtures and hot water heaters, to detecting and fixing leaks, cleaning drains and more, CDS Plumbing Services Central Florida has it covered. If you're dealing with a burst pipe, severe

leak, or a clogged drain, they'll resolve the problem to get things squared away and working properly.

"We want to be your hometown plumber," says Tyler. "We don't want to be the company you call once and never call back, but rather the company you call every time for all your plumbing needs."

CDS Plumbing Services provides quality plumbing work at competitive pricing. Tyler puts a priority on providing outstanding customer service.

"We go above and beyond for our customers to make sure they're taken care of," he says. "We're here to serve the community."



Justin Cook
&
Tyler Hyrons



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SALON

WHERE BEAUTY BLOOMS

Embellished Salon a one-stop shop for style, harmony and self-care.



When Brook McKelvey and her significant other, Anthony Torri, opened Embellished Salon in 2016, they envisioned a place that would go beyond offering beauty services. “We want to be your one-stop shop for everything beauty,” Brook shares, her passion evident as she describes the salon’s mission to create a welcoming, homey atmosphere where customers feel at ease, no matter their day.

Now, nine years later, Embellished Salon has blossomed into a bustling beauty destination. Located in a charming building that once housed a 1950s grocery store, the 6,000-square-foot salon features 20 chairs for hairstyling, three nail techs, a massage therapist, a permanent makeup room and 14 suites hosting a range of services—from hair and skincare to Botox and fillers. It’s a thriving hub for self-care.

What sets Embellished Salon apart is its commitment to fostering a positive environment for both its clients and its team of nearly 40 professionals.

“In the beauty industry, things can get kind of catty, but I work hard

to stop that before it starts,” Brook explains. “My goal has always been to create a family-like environment where everyone works together and supports each other, and we have a really good group here.”

This emphasis on harmony extends to customers, who consistently praise the salon’s friendly vibe. “If your employees are happy, your customers are happy; simple as that,” Brook says. “I decided that if I was going to open a salon, I was going to create an environment free of toxicity and that people actually wanted to come spend time in, relax and feel peaceful at.”

Embellished Salon is also poised for growth. Within the next three months, Brook and Anthony will open a second location in Lady Lake near Target, focusing on skincare and hair services. A third location in Sumter County is set to follow later this year, with talks already underway for a possible fourth in Clermont.

These expansions reflect Brook’s dedication to meeting the community’s growing demand for quality beauty services. They also

create new opportunities for stylists. “I want to help the girls grow from commission stylists to independent booth renters running their own businesses,” she says.

Embellished Salon’s success is a testament to Brook’s vision: a salon that combines top-notch services with a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Whether you’re stopping by for a haircut, a consultation or a new pair of earrings from the boutique, Embellished Salon promises a personalized experience that leaves you looking and feeling your best.

For more information, visit their website or stop by for a free consultation.

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JEWELRY

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Exciting changes will soon bring Bob's Coins & Jewelry customers even more options and convenience. After 27 years in the same plaza, the third-generation business is moving into its own building this spring.

Along with their expansive inventory and trusted services, the new location will feature a much larger showroom, increased viewing opportunities and private buying rooms. It's a win-win for both customers and the long-time family-owned and -operated business.

The store is moving just under three miles away to Heritage Hill Shoppes, a plaza in Summerfield, which is currently under construction. Unlike their current location, they own the new plaza, which includes nearly 12,000 square feet and will have four other spaces for lease.

The grand opening is expected on May 1, 2025.

"My father, Bob Irwin, started the store in 1998," says Vickie Buxton, who manages the business and does much of the jewelry repair. Bryan, Vickie's husband, and their children, Cameron

Buxton and Emily Cornejo, also work for the family business.

Bob's Coins & Jewelry is known for its large inventory of jewelry, coins and precious metals. If it pertains to jewelry, the store has it covered—from buying and selling, to repair, modification, appraisals and fabrication of custom pieces.

"We're probably the largest repair store in the area and all repairs are done on premises," says Vickie.

The coin department not only buys and sells collectibles, but also currency and bullion. Their expert team has the knowledge and experience to evaluate items, do appraisals for insurance purposes and offer fair buying prices.

"We also sell investment products like gold bullion, which is just like buying stock, but you have a tangible item in your hand," says Vickie.

"Our new showroom will be about 4,500 square feet, which is much larger than our current one. Most walls are glass, so you can see the jewelers work. We're adding a room where you can watch laser cutting and engraving be done," she says.



New Location

"We're probably the largest repair store in the area and all repairs are done on premises."

—VICKIE BUXTON, MANAGER

"We'll also have private buying rooms for anyone coming in with family heirlooms or estate items. This provides safety and a more comfortable atmosphere, so those conversations don't take place at the counter with other shoppers around," adds Vickie.

Until the store moves to their new plaza, come see them in their current location. Business tenants interested in renting space in their new plaza should call to inquire.

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PAINTING

FUELED BY FAITH

Painting is his business, but Omar Contreras sees it as an opportunity to bless others.



Faith in God and years of hard work enabled Omar Contreras to achieve the American dream. The customers of Omar's Painting, Inc. are reaping the benefits.

"Twenty-six years ago, I came to the United States in pursuit of the American dream," says Omar. "Back in Mexico, I was studying business with hopes of building a better future. Upon arriving in the U.S., I began working at Taco John's in Tavares, where I had the privilege of working closely with the owner. He became a mentor to me, teaching me invaluable lessons about hard work, dedication, and entrepreneurship."

In 2004, Omar's brother, Isaac Contreras, introduced him to the painting trade. Omar refined his skills while working for different painting companies.

With his employer's knowledge and full support, he often took on weekend side jobs. In 2008, he received a call from a memorable client, who has since become a dear friend. That client needed his home's exterior painted and

knew multiple people who needed their homes painted.

Omar's schedule began to fill, leaving him booked two to three months in advance. He took this unexpected growth as a clear sign that God was opening doors.

"This was solidified by a prophecy from my former pastor, Allen Speegle, who shared that I would start my own painting company," he adds.

Taking a leap of faith, he opened Omar's Painting, Inc. that year.

The company provides quality painting services throughout Lake, Sumter and Marion counties, using top-of-the-line paints from Sherwin Williams. Customers appreciate the fact that Omar himself is personally involved and hands on through every project, ensuring that the quality of work meets his high standards.

"We all have different God-given talents. Mine is the skill I have with my hands, particularly in painting. I have found not only a profession but a purpose—to provide quality work and serve others with integrity and faith," he says.

Not only does he use his painting skills to help clients, but he's also had the privilege of mentoring people starting their own businesses.

Although he and his family made many sacrifices along the way, they've always felt the hand of God's provision. Omar has no doubt his company's success is due to putting God first.

"His blessings have been abundant, and His presence constant, leading us through every challenge and opportunity with grace and purpose," says Omar with gratitude.



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HOLISTIC CARE

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Years of working in the emergency room inspired Colleen Wallace, APN, when she and her husband, Ken, opened Wallace Health in Umatilla. “I like the chaos of the ER so I thought primary care would be boring, but I made sure it wouldn’t by offering a lot of services that traditional doctors don’t,” says Colleen, an Advanced Practice Nurse.

Patients come to Wallace Health for a wide variety of wellness services, screenings and treatment for illness and injuries. The practice offers so much more, including a large menu of aesthetic procedures—from medical weight loss and skin resurfacing to tattoo removal, treating acne and wrinkles, and more.

Hormone replacement therapy can be a gamechanger and

Colleen is well respected for her skill in this area.

Femi-lift treatments treat bladder incontinence and promote vaginal rejuvenation. The Cryoskin Body Slimming Machine helps reduce fat cells and tighten skin. Wallace Health also offers Botox, PDO threads and the CO-2 laser.

Even more than the services offered, it’s the individualized attention that keeps patients coming back.

Wallace Health is well known for providing holistic care. This approach makes a noticeable difference in outcomes and how patients feel about health care.

Holistic care is a different model from traditional medical training and doesn’t go straight to pharmaceutical solutions. For example, if someone has high cholesterol, Colleen doesn’t automatically advise them to take statins. She’ll first explain how they can make lifestyle changes like adjusting their diet and which supplements can help.

She is very knowledgeable about diet and supplements and takes the time to help patients learn how they can take charge of their health.

Her ultimate goal is to get people off medications whenever possible.

“I look at each patient as the whole person, not just their symptoms. I really listen and take time with them, which is why I have patients who come from out of county and even out of state,” says Colleen.

The goal of Colleen and her entire team is to provide holistic care with respect, compassion and dignity at a fair price. In addition to primary and walk-in care for minor and acute health issues, patients benefit from complimentary services to improve overall health, appearance and well-being.

Wallace Health is accepting new patients. If you’re ready to work with a health care provider who truly cares and will treat you as an individual, call the practice today.



287 S. Central Ave, Umatilla
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www.wallacehealthcares4u.com



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For over 50 years, Central Florida homeowners have turned to Scott's Roofing, a third-generation family-owned business located in Tavares.

"My grandfather, Bob Scott, started the company in 1973.

My dad, Tommy Scott, now owns it, and my mom, JoAnna, also works full-time in the business," says Tyler Scott, chief operating officer. "We are still family-owned and operated and are the oldest roofing company in Lake County."

This strong local connection is vital, as the roofing industry has experienced big changes. One of the most significant changes is that many long-standing local companies have been bought out by big private equity firms and are using subcontractors for labor.

Unlike these companies, Scott's Roofing uses all in-house employees, no subcontractors.

"The repetition of work allows us to continue the same quality of workmanship," says Tyler.

"Most customers are just a name and number in a computer system with these large private equity firms," he notes. "With us, our customers are like family, and we see our customers out in the community. People are close-knit here and want to know you're going to be around to take care of them."

Scott's Roofing is a Florida-licensed roofing contractor and offers upgraded warranties because they are an Owens Corning platinum dealer. They proudly offer one of the best warranties in the industry—a 50-year system Preferred Protection warranty on Owens Corning® Roofing.

"This is a full system warranty, meaning it covers all Owens Corning® material installed on the roof, including underlayment, shingles, ridge cap, ventilation. Everything is covered up to 130-mph winds—even named storms. It also covers labor, installation, and disposal," says Tyler.

Also included is a 10-year workmanship warranty, so any issues caused by installation are covered.

"The repetition of work allows us to continue the same quality of workmanship."

—TYLER SCOTT,
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Scott's Roofing specializes in residential and commercial re-roofing, installing at least 400 roofs every year in Lake, Sumter, and Marion Counties. The company is licensed, bonded, and fully insured.

The Scott family built their business in the place they've called home for decades, so taking care of their customers is a priority.

You can rely on their expertise and workmanship for all your roofing needs.



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AGENDA

EVENTS
TRAVEL
PEOPLE

LOCAL TALENT

Cookies brimming with love, tradition and flavor—Jacqueline Reyes shares the story behind Clermont's Cookie Queen.

PG

65





THE TO-DO LIST

FEB
14-16

FESTIVAL

Bagpipes and Banners

Celebrate Scottish culture at the Mount Dora Scottish Highland Festival featuring pipes and drums, Highland athletics and dancing, merch and society tents, Celtic music and the heritage clan village and more. Food and drink tents throughout. Open to residents and visitors. All ages welcome.

→ **Elizabeth Evans Park** / 530 N. Donnelly Street, Mount Dora
8am-6pm / 352.735.7100 / <https://ci.mount-dora.fl.us>

2025
feb



FEB 28 **MAR 1-2**

EVENT

INDIGENOUS INSPIRATION

Enjoy the 2025 Thundering Spirit Family Pow Wow and celebrate traditional Native American culture including drumming, dancing, crafts and food. Bring the whole family and spend the day. Don't forget to bring chairs and blankets as seating is limited.

→ **Renninger's Twin Markets**
20651 New Hwy. 441 Mount Dora
Friday & Saturday 9am-10pm
Sunday 9am-5pm / 352.636.4271
thunderingspiritfamily.com

FESTIVAL

By George!

The City of Eustis invites you to the 123rd Annual Georgefest, a weeklong, family-friendly celebration of the Father of our country. Georgefest is the longest continuously running celebration of George Washington's Birthday in the United States. This year's event will feature carnival rides and games, a bass tournament, the annual "Running of the Georges" race, a dog-jog, parade, contests, vendors and live entertainment!

→ **Downtown Eustis & Ferran Park / 250 Ferran Park,**
Eustis / City of Eustis Events and Tourism
352.483.5491 / events@eustis.org

FEB 15-22



feb.ON STAGE

Enjoy quality entertainment on the many stages of Lake and Sumter counties.

TOM, DICK & HARRY 2/1-9

by Ray & Michael Cooney
Eager to impress the lady from the adoption agency, Tom and his wife have been prepping for months. Chaos ensues when Tom's inept brothers, Dick and Harry, show up to lend a hand.

Sonnentag Theatre at the Ice House
1100 N. Unser Street / Mount Dora
info@icehouse.com / 352.383.4616

Local Comedy

The Sharon, The Villages / 352.753.3229
tickets@thevillages.com

RYAN HAMILTON 2/8 @ 7pm

Named one of Rolling Stone's "Five comics to watch," Ryan Hamilton has a unique perspective. First, growing up in rural Idaho and later becoming a favorite in the New York stand-up comedy scene.

DUSTY SLAY 2/25 @ 7pm

With long hair, tobacco, over-sized glasses and a trucker hat, Dusty Slay is the self-effacing bourbon-voiced Southern comedian next door with a knack for observational, blue-collar humor and the nerve to say what everyone else is thinking.

ONGOING EVENTS Events are subject to change and cancellation.

EVERY SUN	EVERY SUN	EVERY MON	EVERY TUE	EVERY FRI	1ST SAT	1ST FRI
Clermont Farmers Market 9am-2pm Downtown Clermont	Downtown Mount Dora Village Market 9am-2pm Mount Dora	Sumter County Farmers Market 6am-2pm 524 N. Market Blvd., Webster	Lady Lake Farmers Market 9am-2pm 250 Rolling Acres Rd., Lady Lake	Groveland Farmers Market 9am-1pm Lake David Park, Groveland	Brown's Junk in the Trunk 7:30am-1pm 13940 US 301, Oxford	Eustis First Friday 6-9pm Downtown Eustis





feb. JAMS

Move to the beat of your favorite performers at these great concerts or local venues!

2/4 @ 7pm

UPTOWN: A CELEBRATION OF MOTOWN AND SOUL
The Sharon, The Villages

2/4 @ 7pm

BURTON CUMMINGS
The Tracy, Middleton

2/7 @ 7pm

SUZY BOGGUSS
Orange Blossom Opry, Weirsdale

2/8 @ 2:30 & 7pm

RICKY SKAGGS
Orange Blossom Opry, Weirsdale

2/8 @ 7pm

FOGHAT
The Tracy, Middleton

2/10 & 11 @ 4 & 7pm

THE BRONX WANDERERS
The Savannah Center, The Villages

2/11 @ 7pm

THE OZARK MOUNTAIN DAREDEVILS
The Sharon, The Villages

2/12 @ 7pm

STACY MITCHHART
Orange Blossom Opry, Weirsdale

2/14 @ 2:30 & 7pm

SUPERSTAR: THE CARPENTERS REIMAGINED
Orange Blossom Opry, Weirsdale

2/14 @ 7pm

THE VILLAGES PHILHARMONIC
The Sharon, The Villages

2/15 @ 2:30 & 7pm

TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT, THE HYBRID ROD STEWART TRIBUTE
Orange Blossom Opry, Weirsdale

2/16 @ 2:30 & 7pm

NEAL MCCOY
Orange Blossom Opry, Weirsdale

2/16 @ 7pm

THE TOMMY DORSEY ORCHESTRA
The Sharon, The Villages

2/16 @ 7pm

CHRIS BOTTI
The Tracy, Middleton

2/19 @ 7pm

ALLY VENABLE
Orange Blossom Opry, Weirsdale

2/21 @ 3 & 7pm

THREE TENORS PLUS ONE
The Sharon, The Villages

2/21 @ 7pm

ACE FREHLEY
The Tracy, Middleton

2/21 @ 7pm

LIVE & LET DIE: THE MUSIC OF PAUL MCCARTNEY
Clermont Performing Arts Center, Clermont

2/22 @ 7pm

ROBERT CRAY BAND
The Tracy, Middleton

2/22 @ 2:30 & 7pm

FOREVER SEGER: THE SILVER BULLET EXPERIENCE
Orange Blossom Opry, Weirsdale

2/23 @ 2:30 & 7pm

THE BUCKINGHAMS
Orange Blossom Opry, Weirsdale

2/24 @ 7pm

TRAILBLAZING WOMEN OF COUNTRY
The Sharon, The Villages

2/27 @ 7pm

PAUL ANKA
The Sharon, The Villages

2/28 @ 7pm

U2: THE JOSHUA TREE
The Tracy, Middleton

2/28 @ 7pm

MIKE MASSÉ & JEFF HALL
Clermont Performing Arts Center, Clermont

3/1 @ 2:30 & 7pm

GEORGE & TAMMY FOREVER
Orange Blossom Opry, Weirsdale



EVENT

Cooks gone wild

Florida State Parks presents a campfire Dutch oven cooking class to learn preparation techniques, make cast-iron dishes and sample the finished product. \$3/vehicle or Florida State Parks annual pass plus \$5/person activity fee. @

→ **Dade Battlefield Historic Park** / 7200 Battlefield Parkway, Bushnell
9am-12:30pm / Pre-registration is required / 352.793.4781
dadeprograms@floridadep.gov

Let us help you get the word out!

→ To have an event considered for the calendar, send a short text description along with a color photo (if available) 45 days in advance of event to:
calendar@akersmediagroup.com or Lake & Sumter Style Calendar,
P.O. Box 490088, Leesburg, FL 34749

FEB
22



ONGOING EVENTS Events are subject to change and cancellation.

EVERY THU	1ST FRI	2ND FRI	2ND SAT	2ND SAT	4TH SAT
Lake County Farmers & Flea Market 8am-noon 2101 N. CR 452, Eustis	Clermont First Friday Food Trucks 5:30-9pm 685 W. Montrose St., Clermont	Second Friday Farmers Market 5-9pm Lake David Park, Groveland	Plaid in the Park 5-9pm 230 W. 4th Ave., Mount Dora	Main Street Classic Car Show 5-9pm 510 W. Main St., Leesburg	Eustis Classic Car Cruise-In 4-8pm Downtown Eustis



PEOPLE

Treats that reign supreme

Cookie queen shares the secret ingredient behind her success.

STORY: ROXANNE BROWN × PHOTO: NICOLE HAMEL

From her cozy shop in downtown Clermont, Jacqueline Reyes delights customers with handmade cookies honoring family tradition. As the owner of Cookie Queen, her passion and dedication are evident in every batch.

"My favorite thing is seeing my customers' faces light up when they take their first bite. And hearing them say, 'Wow, your cookies are so amazing,' fills me with joy," Jacqueline says.



Jacqueline's love for cooking began in childhood, inspired by her grandmother (on her father's side), Delia Rosa. "I watched everything she did and noticed how it was all done with her own hands," Jacqueline recalls with a loving smile. Growing up in Venezuela, she spent countless hours by her grandmother's side. "As I got older, she inspired me more and more."

Her mother also played a big role. "When I wasn't with my grandmother in the kitchen, I was with my mom, who, whether baking desserts or fixing a family meal, also made everything completely from scratch."

After moving to the U.S., Jacqueline lived her first year in Miami before settling in Clermont, overcoming challenges like starting over after 28 years of marriage. Determined to create with her hands, she initially ran a house-cleaning business before deciding on opening a bakery focusing on cookies, but with a twist.

Jacqueline's cookies are unique: literally huge (6 oz.+), stuffed with different fillings like hand-cut apples in her apple crumble pie cookie, Nutella in her domino cookie, and topped with goodies like a graham cracker and toasted marshmallow on her s'mores cookie.

Cookie Queen, which started with five flavors, now offers over 25 varieties, with seasonal additions and customer favorites like Chocolate Chip, Biscoff and Caramel Pecan. Two of her personal favorites—Cinnamon Churro and her signature "Cookie Queen," a strawberry cheesecake masterpiece—hold special memories.

"I fall asleep thinking of cookies and possible flavor combinations, and I must dream about them because sometimes I wake up thinking, 'I want to release a cookie that has this, this, and this,' Jacqueline says with a smile, adding that her goal is to expand Cookie Queen in a bigger location and "God willing," open more stores across Florida and beyond.

For now, Jacqueline remains in downtown Clermont. Her daughter, Maria Laura Macorini, is by her side watching and helping in the kitchen. Jacqueline's niece Vanessa is taste tester for new flavor creations.

"I don't feel like I'm going to work every day, because I'm doing exactly what I enjoy doing most," Jacqueline says. "I never bake in a bad mood because I want everyone to taste the love I put into every batch of cookies I make."

Cookie Queen, located in The Downtown Exchange at 639 8th St., Clermont, is open Tuesday through Sunday. For more information, hours or to order online, visit cookiequeenfactory.com. @

Know of a talented person in our community? → Email their story to roxanne@akersmediagroup.com.



ROXANNE BROWN



Lenka Brady, Shayna Raymond & Cristina Barrato



Nancy Dodd & Shahanaaz Rahaman



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Allison Strange & James Baxley



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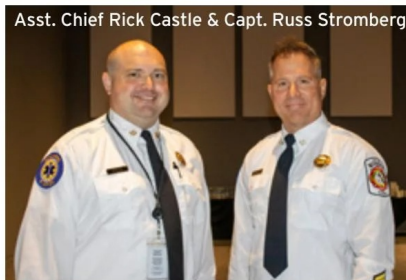
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Chief Broadway & Sgt. Andy Razle



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Hannah Swidler, Jill Ganley, Regina Cruz-Morales & Alexandra Hammond



Lt. Mike Giddens, Capt. Zach Corman, Rick Thomas, Renee & Rodney Lannaman



Leesa Hodges, Linda Smith, Rick Sabarid & Steve Smith

SALUTING OUR HEROES

@ CLERMONT × PHOTOS: MATTHEW GAULIN

The 3rd Annual First Responders Breakfast was held at the Clermont Performing Arts Center on September 20, 2024. Each year, the South Lake Chamber of Commerce offers this unique opportunity for local business leaders to unite and show their heartfelt support and appreciation for the dedicated first responders who serve the community tirelessly. As breakfast was served, community members heard inspiring stories and acknowledgments while celebrating the bravery and commitment of Lake County's first responders. @

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—SCOTT STEPHENS

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Catherine Waters, Julie Staton & Christine Dill



Nancy Wilkins, Evelisse Bookhout, Toni Carocciolo,
Maria Abdoul Karim & Donna Kirtland



Chelsea Metka, Regina Cruz-Morales & Jennifer Brody



Daniela Martinez, Teresa
Kennedy & Beth Merrick



Sharon Keeble, Gayle Tomasini
& Nicole Blumenaver



Terri Cosgrove, Cary Carbonaro & Sarah Boblin

LITTLE DRESSES, BIG EVENT

@ WINTER GARDEN × PHOTOS: ROXANNE BROWN

The Women's Giving Alliance (WGA) of the Community Foundation of South Lake celebrated its 10th anniversary with a Little Black Dress Soirée on September 19, 2024. This milestone gala marked a decade of transformative philanthropy dedicated to enhancing the lives of women and children in the South Lake area. Attended by dozens of members and guests at the lovely home of Cary Carbonaro, the WGA was recognized for the more than \$265,000 in community grants over the years supporting 13 South Lake County nonprofit organizations dedicated to helping women and children. The night also served as a call to action for the future, starting with a grant presentation to the (Faith) Neighborhood Center of South Lake. @

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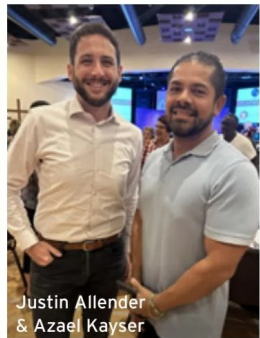
Otis and Sandra Taylor
& Maritza Rivera



Sgt. Eric Ruiz
& Officer David Colon



Hannah Broadway,
Wes Banks & Allison Broadway



Justin Allender
& Azael Kayser



Donna Kirtland & Rodney Drawdy



Eric & Tiffany Ahern, Sherry & Chuck
Seaver, Desiree Robles
& Rick Scherer



Sheriff Peyton Grinnell, Commissioner
Sean Parks & Clermont Police
Chief Charles Broadway



Nathan Focht, Banks Helfrich
& Gayle Tomasini



Jennifer & Ella Bachmann

GOOD-NATURED FUN FOR A GREAT CAUSE

@ CLERMONT × PHOTOS: ROXANNE BROWN

The Advent Health Battle for Hope “Cops vs. Sheriffs” took place September 13, 2024 at the Wesley Center in Clermont. Police Chief Charles Broadway led the city team and Sherriff Peyton Grinnell led the county team to benefit Find, Feed and Restore, an important local organization that offers multiple housing solutions for families with children including Housing First, Affordable Housing and Homelessness Avoidance. This ‘Family Feud-style’ game battle raised money to help house families, allowing them to break free from the cycle of homelessness, all while bringing a little fun and laughter to the large crowd there to cheer them on. @



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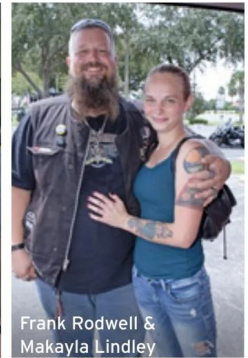
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Jennifer Moser & Michelle Keown



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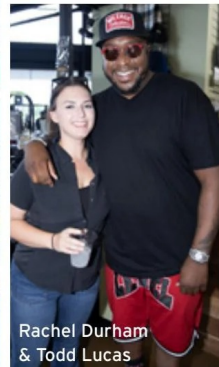
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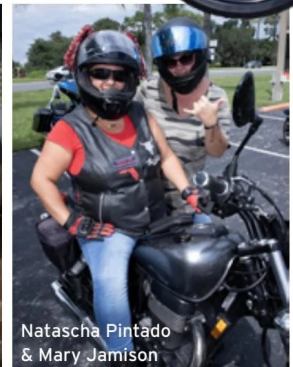
Morena Delgado, Omayra Graciani & Francisco Santos



Mike Maddox & Susan Wilcox



Rachel Durham & Todd Lucas



Natascha Pintado & Mary Jamison

HOGS AND HONORS

@ LEESBURG × PHOTOS: ANTHONY RAO

A Salute to Service was sponsored by Gator Harley in Leesburg on September 14, 2024 to celebrate and honor local military and first responders past and present. A banner signing, honor photo, national anthem and color guard added to the festivities. The Lake County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) provided food and Nam Knights MC Green Swamp Chapter provided the beverages. Swamp Juice played for the attendees and \$6,502 was raised for LCSO Charities. Escorted ride from AMVETS Post #1992, test ride tent and free safety inspections rounded out the day. @



Toby Farmer, Dani Hon & Gene Perkins

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SPORTING SPOTLIGHT

From baseball to life lessons, Coach Tanner Clark redefines success at Umatilla High School.

PG

80





JASMINE LAWRENCE

Senior balances softball, academics and ambitions.

STORY: KYLE COPPOLA × PHOTO: NICOLE HAMEL

PEOPLE

Tavares High School senior Jasmine Lawrence views softball as more than a game—it's been a journey of self-discovery, joy and valuable life lessons.

With seven years of experience, Jasmine has transformed her initial struggles into a story of triumph fueled by passion, determination and family support.

Jasmine's first game of softball was during a family gathering when her cousin Evie, new to the sport, inspired her to give it a try. Jasmine was playing flag football at the time but found herself drawn to softball's dynamic nature.

"I was horrible at first," Jasmine admits. "But when I was 13 or 14, I got serious about it. Softball gave me joy, taught me so much about life and brought me closer to my family and teammates."

Jasmine credits her hitting coach, Sergio Rodriguez, as a key influence in her development.

"He taught me discipline, how to control my attitude, and how to trust myself," she shares. "Softball is 80% mental, and he's helped me build confidence and focus."

This mental resilience has been a cornerstone of Jasmine's success. She's learned to focus on her own progress rather than comparing herself to others.

"Everyone's journey is different," she says. "Focus on yourself and you'll be surprised at how far you go."

"FOCUS ON YOURSELF AND YOU'LL BE SURPRISED AT HOW FAR YOU GO."

Jasmine is not only a standout athlete but also a high-achieving student with a 5.0 weighted GPA who is dual-enrolled at Lake-Sumter State College. She's also a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and has her sights set on a career in cybersecurity.

"I've always been interested in computer science," she says. "It's exciting to think about the opportunities in the cybersecurity field."

As Jasmine enters her senior year at Tavares High, she's eager to make the most of her final year after signing a letter of commitment to Troy University in Alabama.

"I'm really looking forward to this season," she says. "I'm ready to hit some bombs and make lasting memories with my teammates. Signing with Troy was incredible, and I can't wait for the opportunity to play NCAA Division 1 softball and further my education."

Jasmine's success wouldn't have been possible without the sacrifices of her parents and the support of her family, teammates and travel ball coaches.

"My parents have given so much time and money to help me get here, I am so thankful for them," she reflects. "I am also grateful to all my teammates, friends and coaches for all the work they put in to help me achieve my goals." 📸

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PEOPLE

BRADY MONTROWL

Lake Minneola ace prepares for the next chapter.

STORY: KYLE COPPOLA × PHOTO: NICOLE HAMEL

Lake Minneola High School's Brady Montrowl is more than just a rising star in baseball—he's a scholar, leader and community advocate whose journey exemplifies perseverance and gratitude.

The senior pitcher recently committed to the University of Central Florida (UCF), where he'll continue to dazzle on the mound while pursuing his academic and professional baseball dreams.

Brady's baseball resume is as impressive as it is inspiring. Ranked 5th among left-handed pitchers in Florida and in the top 50 nationally, he consistently throws a 92-mph fastball that has scouts and opponents taking notice. Over three baseball seasons, he's tallied 125 strikeouts with a remarkable 39 percent strikeout rate.

Despite his baseball prowess, Brady didn't always love the game. As a child, he was reluctant to try out for the sport, but his father, Steve, encouraged him to attend a practice.

"I actually didn't want to try baseball as a young kid," Brady recalls. "As I matured, I got better and stronger, and by the time I was a teenager, I knew baseball was what I wanted to do."

Aside from baseball, Brady excels in academics and community service.

With a 4.92 GPA, he balances a rigorous schedule as a dual-enrolled student at the University of Florida. There, he is an active participant in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and a member of the National Honor Society.

"I especially love FCA because I get to worship God while also playing with people who share my values," he says.

Giving back to the community is another pillar of Brady's life. He has completed over 100 hours of community service, donating shoes to those in need and helping with events for individuals with special needs. He also contributed to a unique training initiative for umpires by participating in mock baseball games.

"Helping others has taught me so much about gratitude and perspective. The feeling of giving back is one of the best feelings in the world," Brady reflects.

Brady's family has played an integral role in his success. He credits his parents, Steve and Ashlea, for their unwavering support.

"They've put me in amazing positions and sacrificed a lot to get me to this point. I'm so grateful to them and all my coaches for believing in me and helping me earn a Division I scholarship," Brady says.

As Brady prepares for his final high school season, his focus is on creating meaningful memories with his teammates and cherishing friendships he's built. His advice to younger athletes is simple but profound: "Don't worry about the things you can't control. Everything happens for a reason. Practice makes perfect. Try and enjoy every moment you can and the results will come in time." 📸

"I ESPECIALLY LOVE FCA BECAUSE I GET TO WORSHIP GOD WHILE ALSO PLAYING WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE MY VALUES."

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C O A C H T A N N E R C L A R K

by EXAMPLE

See

Umatilla
coach
Tanner
Clark
prepares
players
for game
of life.

STORY: KYLE COPPOLA
PHOTOS: NICOLE HAMEL

Fourth-year Umatilla High School head baseball coach Tanner Clark has quickly established himself as a transformative figure in the world of high school athletics.

Clark, at just 27 years old, has already made history by achieving three straight winning seasons — something the school hadn't accomplished in decades — and guiding the Bulldogs to their first district championship in 22 years.

A lifelong player and student of the game, Clark grew up in Tampa, where baseball was a family tradition. His father, Tracy Clark,



was a high school baseball coach at Springstead High School.

"I've been around baseball since I was 5," Clark said. "Watching my dad coach and being part of that environment inspired me to pursue it as a career."

After playing two years at Umatilla High School and then transferring to Eustis High School, where he played under Coach David Lee, Clark graduated and continued his baseball career at Lake-Sumter State College and then the University of North Florida. It was there, during his senior year in 2021, that the seeds of his coaching career were planted.

"Coach Billings at Lake-Sumter State College approached me about coaching and it got me thinking about the next step," Clark says. "When the Umatilla position became available, Pat Todd, the athletic director at Umatilla High at the time, reached out and sure enough I became one of the youngest head baseball coaches in Lake County."

Clark took over a program that had potential but needed direction. His first year was one of laying foundations, working with a young core of players. Now, those players — who were eighth graders when Clark arrived — are juniors and seniors, and the results of their growth and dedication are evident.

"We've built something special here," Clark says. "Umatilla is a small town, and the players take pride in representing their community. Instead of looking for opportunities elsewhere, they've embraced the chance to develop together and buy into our program."

This small-town pride was on full display the past two seasons when Umatilla defeated local rival Eustis two years in a row, a feat that hadn't been achieved in well over 20 years.

Clark's impact extends far beyond wins and losses.

"You're a person before you're a baseball player, and a student before you're an athlete," he says.

Clark's coaching philosophy emphasizes personal development and character over athletic achievements.

"What I care about most is how my players handle adversity," he says. "I look at how they respond to failure more than they achieve success. I look at how a player can remain composed after a strikeout and go back out and have a flawless inning in the field."

Clark believes his youth is an asset when it comes to connecting with his players. He knows what it's like to play the game at their age and can relate to the challenges they face.

"I think they appreciate that I've been in their shoes not long ago," he says.

At the same time, Clark makes it clear there's a line between player and coach. Discipline is important and they know he expects them to work hard.

For Clark, the most rewarding aspect of coaching is the relationships he builds with his players.

"The best part is when former players come back to games or just to talk," he says. "Hearing how their time in the program impacted their lives is what really matters."

**"WINS ARE GREAT,
AND I WANT
TO CONTINUE
BUILDING ON OUR
SUCCESS. BUT
MY PRIORITY IS
DEVELOPING THESE
PLAYERS INTO
GOOD MEN."**



"THIS IS SUCH AN IMPORTANT TIME IN THEIR LIVES. THEY'RE NOT JUST LEARNING HOW TO PLAY BASEBALL—THEY'RE LEARNING HOW TO HANDLE CHALLENGES, WORK AS A TEAM AND CARRY THEMSELVES WITH INTEGRITY."



Winning is fun, but helping these young men win in life is the real goal."

In addition to his coaching responsibilities, Clark teaches AVID, a college readiness program for juniors and seniors. He guides students through the process of preparing for higher education, helping them set goals and plan for their futures.

"I love working with these students," Clark says. "Umatilla has a strong culture of support, and programs like AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) and AICE (Advanced International Certificate of Education) give our students incredible opportunities to further their education."

Clark credits Principal Brent Frazier with fostering this environment.

"We've gone from a D school to a B school, and that's because of the culture Principal Frazier has created," he says. "Every student on campus knows that academics come first, and we all work together to help them succeed."

Winning the district championship this past season was a high point for Clark and his team.

"It was a surreal moment," he said.

"That's been my goal since day one, knowing how long it had been since Umatilla last won. Seeing the joy on the faces of our players, coaches, and families was unforgettable. It meant so much to the program and the

community and to do it against Montverde Academy of all team's was such a beautiful moment for this small town."

Clark's ultimate goal goes beyond trophies and accolades.

"Wins are great, and I want to continue building on our success. But my priority is developing these players into good men," he says. "I want them to leave this program with the skills and character they need to succeed in life."

Clark credits his parents, Wendy and Tracy Clark, as well as Lake-Sumter State College head coach Rich Billings, with shaping his path.

"My parents have been there every step of the way," the coach says. "They never missed a game, and their support means everything to me. My dad's coaching experience and Coach Billings' guidance at Lake-Sumter State taught me so much about the game and how to lead a team."

For Clark, the lessons he learned from his mentors are ones he now strives to pass on to his players.

"This is such an important time in their lives," he says. "They're not just learning how to play baseball—they're learning how to handle challenges, work as a team and carry themselves with integrity."

As he prepares for another season, Clark remains focused on the future.

"Our goal is to keep improving, keep developing and keep building this program," he says. "But most importantly, I want these players to leave here as better people. Winning games is great, but winning in life is what truly matters." 

MENU

FOOD
DRINKS
REVIEWS

FORK ON THE ROAD

PG

Ashley Trinidad of Coco's Sweet Treats spins unique flavors and joyful moments for families throughout Central Florida.

88





IN THE KITCHEN



RECIPE

SWEET SLEUTH

Holistic nutritionist discovers healthy ways to bake the goods.

STORY: GINA HORAN × PHOTOS: NICOLE HAMEL

Growing up, Kally Vathroder didn't dream of earning a bachelor's degree in holistic nutrition or baking alternative desserts for the public, but the 25-year-old is doing both after dealing with a life-threatening illness. "My journey into paleo baking started during one of the hardest times of my life," Kally says. "I was very sick with an autoimmune disease and didn't know what to do or where to turn until

my mom introduced me to Gretta Ellis, who guided me through the world of paleo and gut protocols."

Gretta, of Ellis Integrative Family Practice in Tavares, taught Kally to eliminate certain foods and embrace paleo, a low-carb/high-protein diet of "whole" foods that are high in anti-inflammatory nutrients like omega 3 fatty acids and antioxidants.

For those unfamiliar with the paleo diet, it is nutrition based on consuming foods that humans may have eaten during the Paleolithic Era, around 2.5 million years ago. It emphasizes the pre-agriculture hunter/gatherer foods like fresh vegetables, fruits, nuts,

seeds and high-quality proteins like meat and fish. Paleolithic humans would have eaten a variety of foods, including berries, roots, herbs, birds, bison, deer, fish, fruits, nuts and mammoths.

The paleo diet also eliminates processed foods and those packaged with modern preservatives, in addition to cereal grains, dairy and refined sugar – ingredients that are essential to creating baked goods and desserts that are off limits to many people with dietary restrictions.

Kally has made it her mission to find ways to offer healthy baked goods – including desserts – to everyone.

"While a lot of people are allergic to some of these ingredients, there are ways of making substitutions to achieve healthy options without compromising delicious flavor," she says.

Through experimentation, Kally found creative ways to make treats taste indulgent while staying true to paleo principles. For example, she uses almond or coconut flour instead of wheat flour, natural sweeteners like honey or maple syrup instead of refined sugar and coconut or avocado oil in place of butter.

"You can also use applesauce or banana instead of eggs and coconut milk instead of traditional milk," she says. "These simple swaps make my recipes accessible to anyone with dietary limitations without sacrificing flavor."

Kally now works for Gretta as a receptionist and created the Instagram page for Ellis Integrative. (@thegutzpractitioner)

"I began to experiment with recipes and baked my first batch of paleo banana bread for the office," Kally says. "Then Gretta

suggested that I sell them to our patients and I gave it a try."

That was at the end of 2023, the beginning of a rewarding path towards creating new recipes and sharing them with patients, family and friends.

"Kally's paleo treats show that healthy food can be delicious and fun," Gretta says. "Her paleo banana bread was the start of something special, inspiring others through her health journey. She's helping families enjoy better dessert options without sacrificing flavor and proving that healthy food can still be satisfying."

Kally is also on Instagram @kaleshealthykitchen and sells her paleo goods from that platform. She wanted to show the world how fun and delicious paleo recipes could be and prove that it isn't just a diet but rather something that the whole family can enjoy.

While she could just create recipes and items to sell, Kally is committed to helping others through her expertise and knowledge with her hard-earned degree.

"My education has given me a deeper understanding of holistic health and I'm excited to combine this knowledge with my passion for baking," she says. "My goal is to help others with autoimmune conditions like myself, take care of their health through personalized nutrition and a balanced approach to life." 

"KALLY'S PALEO TREATS SHOW THAT HEALTHY FOOD CAN BE DELICIOUS AND FUN AND HER PALEO BANANA BREAD WAS THE START OF SOMETHING SPECIAL, INSPIRING OTHERS THROUGH HER HEALTH JOURNEY."

— GRETTA
ELLIS



UNDERSTANDING FOOD AND ALLERGIES

AUTOIMMUNITY: The immune system attacks your body's cells instead of protecting them and can attack your joints, kidneys, or skin as if they were foreign and dangerous.

ALLERGIES: The immune system recognizes food or pollen as dangerous and acts like it does when trying to kill a virus or bacteria.

GUT MICROBIOTA: A disruption in the gut microbiota can change how the immune system reacts to foods.

LEAKY GUT: People with autoimmune diseases often have leaky gut, which means the intestinal lining is too permeable. This allows molecules to cross into the bloodstream, where the immune system attacks them.

GENETIC FACTORS: Both allergies and autoimmune diseases can be influenced by genetics. Certain genes can increase the risk of developing either condition.

WHAT IS A FOOD ALLERGY?

According to FARE (Food Allergy Research and Education), when a person's immune system overreacts to something in a certain food, the part of the food that the body reacts to is usually a protein and is called an allergen. The immune system thinks the allergen is a threat and tries to attack it. This response can cause a range of symptoms, which are called an allergic reaction.

- More than 170 foods have been reported to cause food allergy reactions in the U.S.
- In 2004, eight major food allergens—milk, egg, peanut, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish and crustacean shellfish—were identified as responsible for at least 90 percent of the serious food allergy reactions in the U.S.
- In 2021, the U.S. added sesame as the ninth major food allergen.
- The most common food allergies in children are allergies to peanut, milk, shellfish, and tree nut.
- Our genes haven't changed that much over the last 70 years, but our environment has.





PALEO SNICKERDOODLE

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ³/₄ cups almond flour
- 3 Tbsp. coconut flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ¹/₄ tsp. salt
- ¹/₄ tsp. cream of tartar
- ¹/₄ cup melted coconut oil
- ¹/₄ cup maple syrup
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 Tbsp. coconut sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a bowl, mix the almond flour, coconut flour, baking powder, salt and cream of tartar. In a separate bowl, mix together coconut oil, maple syrup and vanilla then combine all of the ingredients from both bowls. Mix the coconut sugar and cinnamon. Roll the dough into individual balls (about the size of a golf ball) and cover with sugar and cinnamon. Place each one on a baking sheet with parchment paper and flatten with your hand. Bake for 12 minutes and enjoy!



PALEO SUNBUTTER FUDGE

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ¹/₂ cups SunButter brand sunflower seed butter
- ¹/₄ cup maple syrup
- ¹/₄ cup coconut oil
- ¹/₂ cup melted chocolate* from Enjoy Life Foods

** This chocolate substitute is allergy-friendly and gluten free*

DIRECTIONS:

Combine 1 cup of SunButter, maple syrup and coconut oil. Put parchment paper into a glass container and pour-in the combination. Set in freezer for 20 minutes. While it chills, melt your chocolate and add the rest of the SunButter and combine. Remove the container from freezer and pour melted chocolate and SunButter on top. Place back in freezer and leave overnight. Cut into squares and enjoy!



PALEO BANANA BREAD

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 large overripe bananas
- 4 eggs
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup melted coconut oil
- 1 3/4 cups almond flour
- 1/2 cup tapioca flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- dash of salt

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine all the dry ingredients into bowl and set aside. In another bowl, mix the eggs, mashed bananas, vanilla extract, and coconut oil. Slowly pour the dry ingredients into the wet and stir by hand. Line your loaf pan with parchment paper and pour in the mixture. Bake for 50 minutes - the top should be golden brown.



PALEO LEMON LOAF

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 eggs
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 1/2 cups almond flour
- 1/4 coconut flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup
- 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 cup coconut milk
- 1/2 cup blueberries
- zest of one lemon

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In one bowl, mix all the dry ingredients, and in another bowl mix all of the wet ingredients. Combine all of the ingredients together and then fold the blueberries gently into the batter. Use parchment paper to cover the bread pan, pour in mix and bake for 45 minutes.



KALLY'S CUPBOARD

(Substitutions Kally uses for her healthy treats)

TRADITIONAL MILK →	COCONUT MILK
CORNSTARCH →	ARROWROOT TAPIOCA FLOUR
SUGAR →	HONEY MAPLE SYRUP COCONUT SUGAR
REGULAR FLOUR →	ALMOND FLOUR COCONUT FLOUR CASSAVA FLOUR
EGGS →	BANANA APPLESAUCE

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GINA HORAN

REVIEW

More than fluff

Coco's Sweet Treats spins memories for all ages throughout Lake and beyond.

STORY: ROXANNE BROWN × PHOTOS: NICOLE HAMEL

For Ashley Trinidad, what started as a creative outlet during the pandemic has blossomed into a beloved business. Coco's Sweet Treats, a mobile cotton candy operation in Eustis, has become more than just a way to spin sugar—it's a symbol

of joy, community connection, and innovation.

Ashley's introduction to cotton candy began during the pandemic.

"My degree is actually in hospitality and event management," Ashley explains. "At that time, all jobs in hospitality kind of screeched to a halt because people were at home and not doing events or anything like that."

Working at a bank at the time, she struggled with not having a creative outlet. One day, inspiration struck while scrolling TikTok.

"I saw somebody spinning cotton candy, and it looked fun," she says. "I wasn't allowed to have cotton candy growing up, so I thought, 'Why not?'"

Despite her husband's initial reservations, Ashley bought a machine and started experimenting.

However, the boxed flavors didn't meet her standards.

"They tasted super artificial," she says. Determined, Ashley delved into research, using less artificial ingredients and dyes than typical cotton candy makers because her cotton candy sugar is made in house. That's also what allows her to more easily customize flavors, colors and accommodate allergies.

"I felt like a little mad scientist in my kitchen," she laughs. "I'd take samples to coworkers, and their excitement really encouraged me."

In late 2020, Coco's Sweet Treats quickly gained a following selling under Florida's cottage food laws after officially being born.

"At a fall festival, we had a line about 20 people long all day," she recalls. "That's when I realized



there was a real space for this in the community.”

The business’s name holds special meaning: it’s a tribute to Ashley’s dog, Coco, adopted from a local shelter. Ashley ensures Coco’s Sweet Treats gives back by donating proceeds to animal shelters.

Coco’s Sweet Treats now offers over 75 flavors, including Strawberry, Blueberry, Toasted Marshmallow, Lucky Charms, birthday cake, cookie dough and many more. Seasonal specialties include “Strawberry Shortcake” with candy hearts for Valentine’s Day, “Rocket Pop” with Pop Rocks for Fourth of July and “Naughty or Nice Glitter Blasts” around Christmas. The latter, a cotton candy creation paired with edible glitter, has become a cherished family tradition locally.

“Parents tell me their ‘elf’ brings some every December 1st,” Ashley says.

Customization options are endless. For one event, she created peaches-and-cream cotton candy for a one-year-old’s “My Little Peach” birthday party. At a wedding, she crafted “Lavender Haze” and butterbeer-inspired flavors, honoring the bride’s love for Taylor Swift and Harry Potter.

“We’re able to make flavors that fit special occasions. That’s the cool part,” Ashley says.

Born and raised in Tavares, Ashley cherishes the connections she’s built. “We’ve had families with us since our first market,” she says of her time as a vendor at Sunsational Farms during Whimsy Market. “We’ve watched their kids grow and even welcomed new siblings. It’s an honor to be part of their traditions.”

Balancing her business with full-time work and motherhood isn’t easy, but Ashley finds it deeply rewarding,

especially when participating in events throughout Central Florida.

With help from her husband, she specializes in cotton candy cakes, cotton candy party favors, glitter blasts, live spinning and more. Her cotton candy is also featured at The Argonaut Bar & Lounge, Crafted Scent Bar, The Salted Fry, Nautilus Coffee Company and Graham’s U Pick Peaches.

“There’s nothing like seeing a child’s face light up when they get a cone,” she says. “It’s why I do what I do.”

Coco’s Sweet Treats even caught the attention of potential franchisees, but Ashley hesitates to expand beyond Central Florida. “Coco’s isn’t just about cotton candy on a stick, it’s about creating memories and connecting with our community,” she says.

Recently, Akers Photographers Nicole Hamel and Matthew Gaulin and I sampled Ashley’s creations. We were taken by flavors resembling their namesakes—Strawberry, Blueberry and Toasted Marshmallow.

My favorite was Lucky Charms, complete with tiny candy-like marshmallows. It reminded me of childhood, when my sister and I picked out the marshmallow shapes from the Lucky Charms cereal to eat first.

We unanimously agreed that the most fun flavor was Rocket Pop. Its melting cotton candy and fizzing Pop Rocks got us giggling.

We brought leftovers back to the office to share them with two of our colleagues’ kids who were there after school. Amazingly, their tastes were pretty consistent with ours: Strawberry, Blueberry, Lucky Charms and Birthday Cake garnered many a “yum,” but Rocket Pop was their top pick.

Like us big kids, they both giggled and visibly enjoyed bite after popping bite.

The only difference is that our parents were not there to stop us from eating too much of it.

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ROXANNE BROWN



BEHIND THE BAR

PEOPLE

MANAGING MIXOLOGY

Mount Dora bar manager keeps orders filled and drinks flowing at Whiskey Kitchen.

STORY: GINA HORAN × PHOTO: NICOLE HAMEL

Being a bar manager can be a thankless job, especially when dealing with hungover, egocentric bartenders and clueless, ego-driven owners. It's a master class in humility that I tried and mostly failed at. For Florida native Joshua Koleini, managing the bar at Whiskey Kitchen in Mount Dora is a gig he embraces as an ideal step in his journey to owning his own beachfront seafood place.

JOSHUA IS BEHIND THE BAR THURSDAY THROUGH SUNDAY

"I started 14 years ago as a busser in Key Largo where I grew up," he says. "I'm 29 now and feel like I'm right on track to achieve my goal, as I've pretty much done it all in climbing the restaurant ladder."

Now that he gets to sample each product and create his own cocktail menu, he says it's rewarding to have achieved another milestone on the way to his goal.

Joshua migrated north via the Space Coast, then through Orlando with a pit stop in Charleston before landing in Lake County. He says the local crowd is open to new things.

"The people in Mount Dora are really chill and laid back but they also appreciate the high-end craft cocktails and growing spirits list we are cultivating," he says. "The fun part is sharing everything I've learned over the years with curious patrons."

Joshua says that managing also allows him to make things happen for his guests, especially when one requests a certain bottle of wine or a special high-end whiskey. And with the Scottish Highland Games happening this month, it's the perfect occasion to share his catalog of whiskeys with thirsty festival-goers.

"I love the fact that I have the ability to make an impact even if it's a tiny one," he says. "And I'm excited to experience my first season of festivals here in Mount Dora." 🍷

JOSHUA'S STRAWBERRY FIELDS

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 3/4 oz. vodka
- 3/4 oz. elderflower liqueur
- 1/2 oz. fresh lime juice
- 1/2 oz. fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 oz. agave syrup
- 1/2 oz. strawberry puree
- 1/4 oz. egg whites
- 4 drops Angostura bitters

DIRECTIONS:

Build all but the egg whites in a shaker over ice, shake, strain into coup glass. Remove ice and add egg whites to dry shake, then strain on top of mixture. Drip bitters 1/4 inch apart on top of built cocktail, then run a toothpick through the dripped bitters. Garnish with a strawberry.

Have a favorite mixologist? → Email me at gina@akersmediagroup.com and tell us which bartender stirs your drinks.



GINA HORAN

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352.432.3380

Guru Indian Restaurant
2400 S. Hwy. 27 Ste. 101
352.241.9884

Oak Wood Smokehouse & Grill
230 Citrus Tower Blvd.
352.394.0036

Robata Japanese Steak House & Sushi Bar
1500 Oakley Seaver Dr.
352.404.9688

Sarah's Greek Cuisine & More
16640 Cagan Crossings Blvd., Ste. 305
352.404.8031

Yummis Frozen Yogurt and Cafe
650 8th St.
352.243.4529

EUSTIS

Gators Dockside
15241 US Hwy. 441
352.357.1255

Stavro's & Sons of Eustis
2100 W. CR 44
352.589.9100

Taki's Pizza House
1600 S. Bay St.
352.357.0022

The Troff
936 N. Bay St.
352.357.9939

Tony's Pizza & Subs
2760 E. Orange Ave.
352.589.9001

FRUITLAND PARK

Stavro's
3223 US Hwy. 441
352.315.0028

The Rose Plantation
200 Rose Ave.
352.805.4340

GROVELAND

Red Wing Restaurant
12500 S. SR 33
352.429.2997

Barrels & Boards
7965 SR 50 A500
352.557.5007

HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS

JB Boondocks Bar & Grill
704 S. Lakeshore Blvd.
352.324.3600

Mission Inn's La Hacienda Restaurant
10400 CR 48
352.324.3910

Mission Inn's Nicker's Clubhouse Restaurant
10400 CR 48
352.324.2718

LADY LAKE

Ay Sonora Mexican Cuisine
989 US Hwy. 27
352.561.4086

Bamboo Bistro
700 US Hwy. 441
352.750.9998

Blu Spoon Frozen Yogurt
704 US Hwy. 441
352.775.4078

El Ranchito
1 Lagrande Blvd.
352.750.3335

Gators Dockside
1004 Main St.
352.430.1377

Harbor Hills Country Club
6538 Lake Griffin Rd.
352.753.7000

Latin Flavors Bar & Grill
13769 US Hwy. 441
352.561.4002

Marco's Pizza
13721 US Hwy. 441
352.775.1500

Oak Wood Smokehouse & Grill
860 S. Hwy. 27/441
352.751.5640

Takis Greek and Italian Restaurant
13761 N. US Hwy. 441
352.430.3630

LEESBURG

Brooklyn's Pizzeria
27405 US Hwy. 27
352.728.2020

Cousin Vinnie's Family Sports Restaurant
10700 US Hwy. 441
352.253.2442

Donut King
708 S. 14th St.
352.805.4888

El Ranchito Mexican Cuban Restaurant
911 W. North Blvd.
352.460.0123

Great Chicago Fire Brewery & Tap Room
311 W. Magnolia St.
352.474.2739

HP Grill
1403 S. 14th St.
352.314.0006

Ichiban Buffet
10301 US Hwy. 441
352.728.6669

Kawachi Sushi & Bar
10601 US Hwy. 441, Ste. C12
352.431.3449

La Palma Mexican Grill
1690 Citrus Blvd.
352.323.1444

Luna Azul
1341 S. 14th St.
352.805.4174

McCracken's Irish Pub
719 W. Main St.
352.460.0659

Mystic Ice Cream
314 W. Main St.
352.812.1366

Naples Italian Restaurant
1107 W. North Blvd.
352.323.1616

Oak Wood Smokehouse & Grill
27745 US Hwy. 27
352.435.4633

Prime 3 on Main
610 W. Main St.
352.314.0015

Rodello's Italian Restaurant
26736 US Hwy. 27
352.319.8093

Ski Beach
21 Dozier Cir.
352.973.0793

The Brick & Barrel Public House
209 W. Main St.
352.431.3069

The Coffee Snob
1101 W. North Blvd.
352.460.4570

The Old Time Diner
1350 W. North Blvd.
352.805.4250

The Sipping Garden and Bistro
605 W. Magnolia St.
352.460.0716

Wolfy's
918 N. 14th St.
352.787.6777

MOUNT DORA

Barnwood Country Kitchen & Smokehouse
3725 W. Old US Hwy. 441
352.630.4903

Fiesta Grande
421 N. Baker St.
352.385.3540



Discover your sweet spot at Peterbrooke Chocolatier

Indulge in all things chocolate at Peterbrooke Chocolatier at Lake Sumter Landing in The Villages, the best place in Sumter County to find your perfect chocolate truffle, toffee or turtle. Eighty percent of Peterbrooke's chocolate treats are made in-house by experienced chocolatiers, which is why the shop is always filled with sweet aromas of cocoa and candy, as well as loyal customers.

Manager Ashlee Burdick and Peterbrooke's talented associates also create chocolate molds and holiday recipes for seasonal specials and custom designs. Inquire about chocolate parties and summer camps where you and the family can learn all about making chocolate. Loyalty program, online treats and corporate gifts are available.

→ **Peterbrooke Chocolatier** / 1087 Canal Street, The Villages / Lake Sumter Landing / 352.415.8700 / www.peterbrooke.com

Magical Meat Boutique

322 N. Alexander St.
352.729.6911

Vincent's Italian Restaurant

5914 Orange Blossom Trl.
352.735.4578

OXFORD

Candelaria Eatery & Café

4059 Thomas St., Unit A01
352.399.2329

Pho Saigon

11717 US Hwy. 301
352.492.9423

TAVARES

Bella Nonna Pizzeria

280 Silverado St.
352.508.9370

BTW (Burgers, Tacos & Waffles)

115 E. Main St.
352.508.9287

Fish Camp Lake Eustis

901 Lake Shore Blvd.
352.742.4400

Hurricane Dockside Grill

3351 W. Burleigh Blvd.
352.508.5137

Puddle Jumpers

111 W. Ruby St.
352.508.5862

Tiki West Raw Bar and Grill

118 W. Ruby St.
352.508.5783

THE VILLAGES

Cody's Roadhouse Brownwood

3731 Meggison Rd.
352.430.2926

Cody's Roadhouse Lake Sumter Landing

1041 Lake Shore Dr.
352.259.8500

Haagen-Dazs Ice Cream

1001 Lake Shore Dr.
352.751.0261

Legacy Restaurant

17135 Buena Vista Blvd.
352.753.1475

Marco's Pizza

5806 Seven Mile Dr., Ste. 101
352.571.2400

NYPD Pizzeria

4046 Wedgewood Ln.
352.750.1994

Peachwave

249 Colony Blvd.
352.750.2238

Peterbrooke Chocolatier

1087 Canal St.
352.391.5877

RJ Gator's Florida Sea Grill & Bar

1015 Lake Shore Dr., #1693
352.751.6935

Roberto's Ristorante Pizzeria

2468 Burnsed Blvd.
352.626.1059

Sakura

265 Colony Blvd.
352.205.7393

TooJays Brownwood

2835 Brownwood Blvd.
352.350.2122

TooJays Lake Sumter Landing

1129 Canal St.
352.430.0410

VKI Japanese Steakhouse and Sushi Bar

1004 Old Mill Run
352.259.9887

UMATILLA

The Mason Jar

37534 SR 19
352.589.2535

WILDWOOD

Napolinos

9811 US Hwy. 301
352.399.6825



Brooklyn's Pizzeria & Italian Restaurant

27405 U.S. HWY 27, LEESBURG | 352.728.2020 & 352.365.9004
MYBROOKLYNPIZZERIA.COM

When hit with a craving for authentic New York style pizza, there's no need to catch the next flight to the Big Apple. Simply visit Brooklyn's Pizzeria & Italian Restaurant in Leesburg and Owners James and Shawna Pancari will make you feel right at home with New York inspired vibes, décor, and flavors. Not only have they perfected the New York style thin crust people swear by, but they take pride in ensuring everything they serve is made fresh and from-scratch daily; including their pizza dough and sauces, strombolis, calzones, subs, salads, wings, specialty Italian and pasta dinners. Additionally, the restaurant is family-run and Veteran-owned, with James having served in the Coast Guard for 31 years. In honor of that, the dining room features a military wall, plus a 10 percent discount for Veterans, active members of the military, police, fire, and first responders. Brooklyn's Pizzeria also offers gluten-free pizza and pasta options, and accepts DoorDash, online-ordering, catering, and curbside pickup.

Mon, Wed, Thu
11:00am - 8:00pm

Friday
11:00am - 9:00pm

Saturday
12:00pm - 9:00pm

Sunday
12:00pm - 8:00pm

**Live music
on Thursdays
5:00-7:00pm**

Closed Tuesday



Guru Indian Restaurant

CLERMONT HILLSIDE TERRACE, 2400 S. U.S. 27, SUITE 101, CLERMONT
352.241.9884 | GURURESTAURANTCLERMONT.COM

Owned by Chef Uday Kadam, Guru has a following of fans who savor the delicious, award-winning Indian cuisine inside the restaurant's beautiful dining room filled with Indian décor and tables with linen tablecloths. Guru earned the prestigious Best Entrée award at the 2021 Taste of South Lake & Business Expo for its Chicken Tikka Masala, featuring boneless chicken pieces cooked in a Tandoor oven with tomato sauce, onion, aromatic herbs, spices, and served with Basmati rice. Guru also has tasty appetizers, Naan breads, vegan dishes, and a wide array of entrees, including Palak Paneer, a dish of homemade cubes of cheese cooked with spinach and fresh spices; Lamb Vindaloo of choice lamb cubes marinated in vinegar with potato and a blend of spices; and Tandoori Chicken Tikka, where the chicken is marinated in mild spices and yogurt. Additionally, Indian alcoholic beverages of Taj Mahal and Kingfisher are served at Guru, and the restaurant caters private functions, parties, and provides many delivery options for orders made online at mygurutogo.com.

Mon - Sat
11:30am - 10:00pm

Sunday
11:30am - 7:00pm



Kawachi Sushi & Bar

10601 US-441, SUITE C12, LEESBURG | 352.431.3449
KAWACHISUSHI.COM

Kawachi Sushi & Bar invites you to explore a World of Flavor in the Lakes of Leesburg shopping center. Owners David and Brenda Chen treat guests like family as they blend traditional Japanese cuisine with a twist of New York City cuisine, offering a menu that tantalizes taste buds and satisfies cravings. From a diverse selection of sushi and hibachi options to savory bento boxes, poke bowls and vegan delights, Kawachi caters to every palate. Customize your sushi experience or indulge in specialty rolls like the crowd-favorite "Sexy Jalapeno." Pair your meal with a vast selection of sake, plum wines or specialty cocktails from the expansive bar menu. With fresh ingredients prepared daily and personalized service, Kawachi promises an unforgettable dining experience. Now offering Happy Hour menu full of food and drink specials, available all day on Mondays and from 3pm-6pm Wednesday - Sunday. Join us for an adventure in culinary excellence, where every bite leaves you craving more.

Mon, Wed-Thur
11:00AM - 9:00PM

Fri - Sat
11:00AM - 9:30PM

Sunday
12:00pm - 9:00pm

Closed Tuesdays

**Happy Hour Food
& Drink Specials
Mon - All Day
Wed - Sun
3:00PM - 6:00PM**



La Palma Mexican Grill

1690 CITRUS BLVD., LEESBURG | 352.323.1444 | LAPALMAGRILL.COM

The entire staff invites you to a delicious dining experience at La Palma Mexican Grill. The recipes used for the restaurant's unique dishes are a blend of old-school traditions from Mexico, combined with culinary inspirations from California and Louisiana. Homemade Mexican entrees such as Tacos Azteca, carnitas, fajitas, Chori Pollo, tamales and more, are flavorful and prepared with only the freshest of ingredients. Sit comfortably in the beautiful dining room, the festive bar, or outside on the patio deck with a serene view of the grounds and of the fun wild animals that can be spotted in the trees. Enjoy fast and friendly service, reasonable prices, three-for-one margaritas all day, every day, and a party room, available by reservation, for large parties or meetings. Full menu at lapalmagrill.com. Call for daily specials.

BWAAAAK!
It's five o'clock
somewhere!



Open Daily
11:00am - 9:00pm

Lunch Specials
11:00am - 3:00pm

**Margarita
Mondays!**

Enjoy \$5
margaritas all day
every Monday.



Prime 3 on Main Steakhouse

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN LEESBURG, 610 W MAIN ST, LEESBURG
352.314.0015 | PRIME3ONMAIN.COM | FACEBOOK: @PRIME3ONMAIN

The dream and concept of three lifelong physicians, Prime 3 on Main is a confluence of American, Asian, and Latin influences in one world-class restaurant. Prime meats, prime rib, skirt steak, and seafood are our specialties. Our filet with black cherry port wine reduction sauce, or the Grouper Fromage, is unique and found nowhere else. Our Casa de Rosado Churrasco is a personal family recipe. Homemade Creme Brûlée and ice cream will complement your meal. Recently given the Award of Excellence from Wine Spectator Magazine as among the world's top wine and food restaurants, Prime 3 on Main has an extensive wine list and caters to small and large groups.



Ask us about our
Wine Pairing Event Dinners!

Lunch Mon - Fri
11:00am - 3:00pm
**No Reservations
Needed**

Dinner Mon - Fri
4:00pm - 9:00pm
Saturday
2:00pm - 9:00pm
**Reservations
Strongly
Encouraged**

Closed Sundays

Thursday is Ladies
Night with **\$7.00
drink specials!**



Rodello's Italian Restaurant

26736 U.S HIGHWAY 27, LEESBURG | 352.319.8093 | RODELLOS.COM

Chef Amadeo Avila invites you to enjoy authentic and fresh Italian cuisine in a friendly, comfortable dining environment at Rodello's Italian Restaurant. The recipes used for his dishes are a blend of old-school traditions from Italy—with new culinary inspirations that Chef Amadeo has learned during many years in the restaurant business. Flavorful, homemade Italian entrees such as Pistachio Crusted Lamb, Salmon Saltimbocca, Lobster Ravioli, Shrimp Risotto, and many others are classics and prepared with only the freshest ingredients. The lunch menu features personal pizzas, calzones, subs, and pasta. Sit in the spacious dining room or enjoy drinks or desserts like delicious gelato in the cozy lounge, which features a full bar, wine menu, and an array of specialty cocktails. Always look for new features on Chef Amadeo's menu, available on the restaurant's website, Rodellos.com.

Open Daily
11:00am - 9:00pm





TooJay's

LAKE SUMTER LANDING

1129 CANAL ST., THE VILLAGES | 352.430.0410

BROWNWOOD PADDOCK SQUARE

2835 BROWNWOOD BLVD., THE VILLAGES | 352.350.2122

Serving your favorite New York Style Deli Food since 1981, we offer hearty portions of homemade comfort foods like Shepard's Pie and Traditional Turkey Dinners, handcrafted sandwiches such as our classic Hot Pastrami and Corned Beef, made-from-scratch soups like our famous Matzo Ball and Beef Cabbage, handmade, award winning cakes including our best selling Banana Dream and Chocolate Killer. Our extensive menu includes Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner with options for everyone. We have incredible over the counter offerings of deli meats and cheeses, as well as made-fresh-daily breads. Our catering menu is the best in town with options for any type of event.

Mon - Sun
8:00am - 8:00pm

**No Matter How
Big or Small
We Cater it All!
And, We Deliver!**

TOOJAYS.COM



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UNITEDSOUTHERNBANK.COM





Prescription for FLAVOR

Prime 3 in Leesburg is a culinary experience from the heart. PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

Located in a beautifully restored brick building in historic downtown Leesburg, Prime 3 embodies the pinnacle of exceptional dining. Created by lifelong friends and physicians, Dr. José Rosado and Dr. Dave Sustarsic, this extraordinary restaurant is the culmination of a shared dream: to offer a welcoming space that pairs an inviting atmosphere with an elevated menu.

With over 65 years of combined expertise in cardiovascular diseases, the duo has meticulously infused their attention to detail into every aspect of Prime 3. Now in its third year, the restaurant has become a destination where fine cuisine, thoughtfully curated wine, and impeccable service converge.

Prime 3's ambiance is both warm and refined. Exposed brick walls, softly lit chandeliers, and cozy booths create a serene backdrop for an extraordinary meal. The menu highlights premium ingredients and bold flavors, with dishes inspired by American and Latin cuisines, all enhanced by global influences.

Signature dishes include grouper fromage, prime rib, and filet mignon topped with a black cherry port wine sauce. The "Casa de Rosado" churrasco and its chimichurri sauce, a

treasured family recipe, adds a distinct Latin flair to the offerings. Lighter fare such as shrimp tempura, bruschetta chicken, and chicken caesar wraps cater to every taste, while seafood enthusiasts and vegetarians alike will discover plenty of satisfying options.

At the heart of Prime 3's experience is its award-winning wine program, led by Dr. Rosado, a Level 3 WSET-certified sommelier. Featuring over 100 expertly curated selections, the restaurant has earned the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence for 2023 and 2024. This honor reflects the restaurant's dedication to offering a compelling wine list paired with outstanding service. At Prime 3, wine isn't just served—it's experienced. The collection spans from approachable selections to rare, complex wines for the most discerning connoisseur. Wine classes throughout the year, highlighting specific wine regions or wine styles, also show the commitment to wine education.

Seasonal and specialty wine dinners are some of Prime 3's favorite celebrations. These events consist of 5-6 course dinners expertly combined with unique wines, the pairings described by our sommelier or a guest wine specialist. The upcoming Valentine's Day dinner, for example, will



OWNERS: Dr. Jose Rosado, WSET; NVWE and Dr. David Sustarsic

be a curated 5 course meal with special entrees. Prime 3 is already working on their next March Wine Dinner.

With an unwavering commitment to quality, welcoming atmosphere, and outstanding service, Prime 3 has received the 2024 Diners' Choice Award from Open Table, and clearly establishes itself as a premier destination for Lake and Sumter counties and all of Central Florida.



Historic Downtown Leesburg
610 W Main St, Leesburg
352.314.0015 | prime3onmain.com
Lunch: Mon-Fri 11am-3pm
Dinner: Mon-Fri 4-9pm, Sat. 2-9pm
(Reservations Strongly Encouraged)

welcome home

volume 14 // issue 1

See more
about this
beautiful
listing on
page 03!



Morris Realty
& INVESTMENTS

LEESBURG / 352.435.HOME / 10135 U.S. HWY. 441, SUITE 3
MORRISREALTORS.COM

SCAN THE
CODE TO VISIT
OUR WEBSITE!





Theresa Morris

Broker/Owner

352.360.3736

Theresa@MorrisRealtors.com

Theresa sells a property every 29 working hours!



STUNNING POOL HOME WITH SPA Beautiful lot in prime location with majestic oak trees in secure golf community. Formal living/dining areas feature elegant laminate wood-look flooring and soaring cathedral ceiling. The primary suite is a tranquil retreat with tray ceilings & French doors leading to the lanai/pool area plus dual walk-in closets. The luxurious primary bath features a door entry for privacy, water closet, deep walk-in shower, dual sinks, abundant cabinetry, vanity area, glass block accent walls, beveled mirrors, tray ceiling with ceiling fan. Split bedroom design, great for guest privacy features a pocket door that lead to bedrooms 2 & 3 with spacious wall closets. Screened in-ground energy efficient electric heated saltwater pool accompanied by an oversized spa. **\$475,000.**



ELEGANT. EXCLUSIVE. EXQUISITE...3 CAR PLUS GOLF CART GARAGE HOME!! Welcome to this absolutely stunning expanded "Palazzo" model perched on this elevated approximate 2/3 acre lot with spectacular rolling hill golf views in the sought after Harbor Hills Golf Community! You will be captivated and in awe from the moment you enter through the custom glass beveled door into the foyer. Enjoy romantic evenings in the Great Room with a gas fireplace that feature custom wood cabinetry & coffered ceilings! The extensive kitchen snack bar and breakfast area in combination with the family room make entertaining a breeze! The inside Laundry Room with built in sink convey the Washer & Dryer. The luxurious primary suite feature double door entry, two walk in closets and crowned tray ceiling. Stylish second bath feature a raised vanity and glass walk in custom shower. Sturdy Block Construction was enhanced and reinforced with rebar, flushed with concrete to fill walls plus interior steel studs...spray foam insulation. Home features custom exterior lighting and wired for alarm system plus 8 cameras! **\$675,000.**



WATERFRONT LIVING ON "CHAIN OF LAKES" NO HOA! The main house is a 4/3 that includes 2 primary suites! Completely remodeled above garage detached 1/1 apartment! The Main House design is made for entertaining! French doors lead to the outside patio/lanai to the enhanced Above 30x15, in-ground Pool. The new addition of the Primary Suite approx. 7 years ago (formerly the garage) includes two huge walk-in closets, chair rail detail & Tray Ceilings. Large inside laundry room that conveys a washer & dryer! Don't miss the opportunity for SERENE WATERFRONT LIVING...ROOM FOR EVERYBODY! **\$615,000.**



"CHAIN OF LAKES ACCESS" POOL HOME! This fabulous residence is located in a desirable waterfront community! Welcome Home to this spectacular "move in ready" with sturdy block construction and "Hurricane Graded" windows. Home upgrades to include current painting of home exterior & interior, newer exterior doors, energy efficient double pane windows with easy clean tilt. Home features 3bed/2bath with 2,353Sqft. **\$514,000.**



GOLF FRONTAGE...MAINTENANCE FREE RESORT STYLE LIVING! "Golden Opportunity" for you to live at the STUNNING MISSION INN RESORT!! Amazing MILLION DOLLAR GOLF VIEWS everywhere you look. Enter into this lovely spacious 3/3 plus oversized 2+ car garage through your own PRIVATE ELEVATOR! START LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE TODAY!! **\$475,000.**



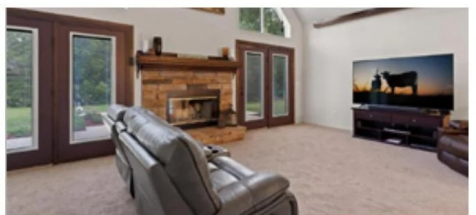
BOATING AND FISHING...CANAL FRONT HOME WITH BOAT SLIP! Fish from your own backyard on this wide navigable canal leading directly to Lake Dora on the CHAIN OF LAKES! This expansive 3-bedroom, 2-bath newly renovated residence offers the perfect blend of comfort and functionality! NO HOA! Recent upgrades include two new AC systems, boat lift, fresh dock decking, and various improvements to the boathouse, roof, and landscaping. Home includes a recent 4 Point Inspection. A Must-See! Schedule your showing today-don't miss the opportunity to make this incredible canal-front home your dream residence. **\$375,000.**



THIS MARVELOUS three bedroom/ two plus 1/2 bath home with over 2300 square feet of living space plus a huge 28 x 28 screen lanai and oversized 2 Garage with separate golf cart entrance!! **\$475,000.**



5 ACRES ...HOME WITH A HEART! Brand New Roof in July 2023! New HVAC year 2022! New Hot Water Heater year 2024! Septic pumped and New Drain field in June 2023! Enjoy "Peace and Quiet " yet minutes to town, hospital, restaurants and close to The Villages! Home features 3 bedrooms and 2 bath with 1,854 sqft. **\$450,000.**



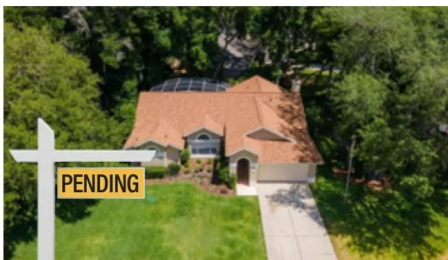


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Haynes

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Lynn@LynnHaynesSellsFlorida.com



ELEGANT SILVER LAKE FOREST POOL HOME that has been remodeled with quality finishes throughout. This four bedroom two and half bathroom home is 2200 square feet with a two year old roof. Easy to maintain with the automatic pool vacuum included. Large screened lanai affords privacy with well-maintained mature landscaping so you can entertain, read, or swim. The beautifully remodeled kitchen has solid wood cabinets, farmhouse sink, granite countertops, double oven, island, eat in dinette area and is open to the family room with a wood burning fireplace with an electric insert. Second set of French doors on the lanai lead to the spacious primary bedroom with walk in closet and remodeled bathroom.



WELCOME HOME TO THIS DESIRABLE NEIGHBORHOOD of Westgate with a Community Dock on Lake Eustis. Spacious four bedroom three full bathroom home built in 2004 by Showcase Homes. This open Windsor Floorplan was designed for modern living and will have a NEW roof and water heater installed before closing and is move in ready. The great room is open to the dining room and kitchen with sliding glass doors to the screened lanai and backyard. Primary suite has private access to the screened lanai, primary bathroom with dual sinks, private water closet and a walk in closet. Inside laundry room leads to the attached two car garage. The split bedroom plan gives privacy for guests, home office or children.

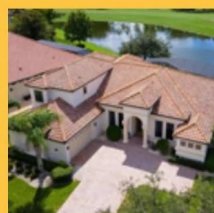


LOOK NO FURTHER FOR YOUR HOME! This charming three bedroom two bathroom home has a popular open floor plan with wood or tile floors in most of the rooms. From the foyer is the living and dining room combination great for entertaining and opens to the family room. The kitchen has dinette area, closet pantry, stainless steel appliances, corian counter tops and opens to the family room and laundry room. From the family room you enter the screened and tiled lanai which leads to the fire pit area and fenced backyard. The primary bedroom has a vaulted ceiling, walk in closet and primary bathroom with updated seamless glass shower, dual sinks and a door to the backyard. There will be a NEW ROOF installed before the new owners arrive!



SPECTACULAR CUSTOM POOL HOME

Located in this sought after "prestigious" GATED GOLF COMMUNITY! Enjoy serene waterfront and golf frontage views of the 16th Tee and Fairway! Discover this majestic two-story home being sold "TURN-KEY"...fully furnished! Enter through your beautiful front doors as you are welcomed into a spacious great room with French doors opening to the pool/lanai that features elegant tray ceilings with soft indirect lighting plus an oversized elegant formal dining area! Enjoy the additional huge family room with a cozy fireplace and built-in shelving. The kitchen is a "Chef's Dream" boasting lots of cabinets, large walk-in pantry, breakfast bar & dinette area, island with a built-in veggie sink & wine rack! 4 bed/ 5 and half bath with 4,146sq.ft. **\$995,000.**



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Kim Ducharme Levensohn

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GOLF COURSE FRONTAGE OASIS! Stunning 3-bed, 2-bath pool home in gated Harbor Hills. Over 2,100 sq. ft. on an oversized lot with breathtaking 17th fairway views. Features include a remodeled kitchen with quartz countertops, soft close drawers, porcelain tile, split floor plan, soaring ceilings, Florida Room and a screened-in pool with brick paver patio. Optional golf and social memberships available. Your dream home awaits—schedule your showing today! **\$499,000.**



FALL IN LOVE with this charming 3-bedroom, 2-bath home featuring a freshly painted exterior and a brand-new roof (to be installed before closing). Inside, enjoy vaulted ceilings, engineered wood floors, a cozy gas fireplace, and an open kitchen perfect for entertaining. The primary suite offers dual closets and a walk-in shower, while the screened lanai and brick paver patio overlook a fenced backyard made for Florida living. Optional HOA includes pool and boat dock access for just \$1,200/year. **\$335,000.**



Meticulously Maintained 2-Bed, 2-Bath Gem—You Own the Land! Perfect as a year-round home or winter retreat, this property offers exceptional value and convenience. Features include vaulted ceilings, laminate wood flooring (no carpet), an open living and dining area, and a newly added 14x25 Florida Room with A/C. The primary suite boasts an ensuite bath with a walk-in shower, while the oversized carport, screened lanai with laundry room, and backyard shed add functionality. Upgrades include a propane generator, new windows, roof, A/C, and more. Low HOA covers water and trash. **\$209,000.**



MAINTENANCE-FREE LIVING IN SANDALWOOD! Beautifully updated 2/2 first-floor condo in the Sandalwood community. Nearly everything is brand-new, from wood plank tile floors and fresh paint to a sleek kitchen with soft-close cabinets, quartz countertops, and stainless appliances. Wood-burning fireplace, perfect for relaxing evenings! Bathrooms boast modern finishes, while the primary suite includes an ensuite bath and new plush carpet. Updates include new windows, a water heater, and more. HOA covers water, sewer, pest control, landscaping, pool, clubhouse, and gym access. **\$165,000.**



AFFORDABLE WATERFRONT GEM! This 2-bedroom, 1.5-bath TURNKEY home on a peaceful canal leading to Lake Eustis. With nearly 140 feet of waterfront, a seawall, and a walkway perfect for fishing or launching a boat, this property offers the ultimate in relaxation. Open living area, laminate wood floors, Florida Room with canal views, and a screened front patio. Bedroom 1 opens to a back patio, while Bedroom 2 offers flexible space for guests or an office. Conveniently located near shopping and dining, this is your chance to own an affordable slice of waterfront paradise. **\$158,000.**



NO LOT RENT—YOU OWN THE LAND! Unlock the potential of this 3-bedroom, 1.5-bath manufactured home, perfect for investors or as a cozy winter retreat. Features include a large screened front patio, rear patio with washer/dryer hookup, and a 2-car carport. Recent upgrades include a newer rolled roof, hot water tank, new drainfield, and freshly pumped septic system. Conveniently located near shopping, dining, and the mall, this property is ready for your vision and TLC. Don't miss this affordable opportunity—schedule your showing today! **\$59,000.**



LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT ADDITION TO YOUR INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO? Look no further! This is your chance to own TWO homes for the price of ONE, located side by side and already tenant-occupied. With built-in rental income, this opportunity combines convenience and profitability like no other. Conveniently located to shopping and Hwy 27. **\$169,000.**

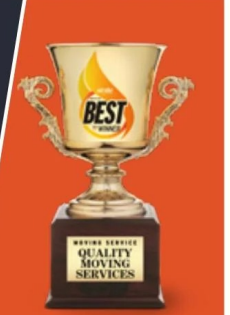


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ROYAL HARBOR 3/2 New roof 2021, Trane system with high capacity ac filter and UV air purifier, exterior painted in 2021, complete interior 2022, updated appliances, washer and dryer stay, and TRAVERTINE throughout the whole house and lanai. Huge outside area with an extended screen area. 2 car garage. FURNITURE IS NEGOTIABLE. CONVENIENTLY LOCATED AND CLOSE TO SHOPPING AND HOSPITALS. Royal Harbor has tons of activities and amenities at your disposal, making it an ideal place to call home! The HOA includes a fitness center, billiards room, arts and crafts room, library, card room, an amazing resort-style pool and spa, and more! GREAT PLACE TO CALL HOME!! **\$345,000.**

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POOL HOME IN THE COUNTRY CLUB OF MOUNT DORA on the second T on a championship golf course. 3 bedrooms 2 baths. As soon as you walk in you step into the spacious living room with trey ceilings and disappearing sliding doors overlooking the pool and the second T on the golf course. Kitchen with nook area overlooks the pool and lanai then leads into the Florida room with fireplace. Split floor plan. The master bath features sliding doors that open to pool and an en suite bath with a double sink vanity, garden tub, separate shower, and a huge 10x10 walk in closet. Home also features a separate air conditioned office off the garage 14x6. Beautiful screened in pool overlooking the golf course. The Country Club of Mount Dora HOA offers a community park and playground. The Country Club of Mount Dora membership gives you access to amenities such as tennis courts, pickleball courts, a championship golf course, community pool, and a clubhouse. Very close to historic downtown Mount Dora, hospitals, shopping and all your local festivals in Tavares and Eustis too. **\$519,500.**



CANAL FRONT ON THE CHAIN OF LAKES 2/2 split plan home on canal leading to Little Lake Harris. Freshly painted inside, new flooring, and new roof in 2019. Oversized 2 car garage. Boat house with boat lift. The HOA fee is only 700.00 a year which also includes your water for the whole year. PRIVATE BOAT RAMP. Located close to the Florida Turnpike and just 10 minutes away to the Tavares Waterfront Seaplane park and unique restaurants and only 15 minutes away from downtown Mount Dora with quaint shopping and a variety of restaurants. FISH FROM YOUR OWN BACK YARD. **\$399,900.**



WATERFRONT LOT ON THE CHAIN OF LAKES in Lake Harris Shores waterfront community. HOA fees are only 500.00 a year, includes water once you are hooked up to the private community well. Septic needed. Lot is 70x150. Build your new home and enjoy the florida lifestyle on the water. Community clubhouse with activities. Close to downtown tavares and mount dora. **\$299,900.**



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DREAM HOME IN THE COUNTRY
BUT YET CLOSE TO SHOPPING
AND RESTAURANTS.**

PROPERTY FRONTS THE OCKLAWAHA RIVER WHICH GIVES YOU ACCESS TO THE WELL KNOWN CHAIN OF LAKES IN LAKE COUNTY OR BOAT NORTH TO THE FAMOUS SILVER SPRINGS OR GO FURTHER TO THE SAINT JOHNS AND THEN TO THE OCEAN...NO HOA FEES.. LOCATED CLOSE TO THE VILLAGES FOR MORE SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT.

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Akers

Licensed Real Estate Agent

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THIS AMAZING VILLAGES HOME is tucked nicely in a cozy cul-de-sac, making it the perfect place for peaceful days. This is a wonderful, easy to maintain home, with two bedrooms and two bathrooms plus a bonus room that could easily be an office or den. **\$329,900.**



THIS BEAUTIFULLY UPDATED, MOVE-IN READY RESIDENCE offers 3 bed/2bath with 2,159sqft The exterior boasts freshly painted trim, durable TILE roof, newly landscaped manicured lawn & updated irrigation system. **\$398,900.**



FULLY FURNISHED! Welcome home to this "TURN KEY" move in ready...just bring your toothbrush and start living the dream! 2bed/2bath with 1,206sqft **\$124,900.**



EQUESTRIAN LOVERS DREAM HOME

7 ACRE ESTATE!
Welcome home to your "Working Horse Ranch" with relaxed country living being sold Fully Furnished "Turnkey". This Immaculate 6 Stall Horse Barn features, tack room, 6 stalls, corral round pin, extra storage & full bathroom with a walk-in shower plus outside patio area with full RV hook up with electric & sewer! Meticulous Estate features Two Homes.



\$2,475,000.



17.5 WOODED ACRES of lakefront property on Lake Deaton. This is a rare opportunity to purchase this large of a parcel directly on an approximately 500 acre Lake. This offering is for two parcels, Sumter County ID: G23-050 and G23-022, currently zoned RR5 within Sumter County. The adjacent property is zoned R2M, so the same zoning could be assigned to these two parcels. Upon rezoning, the property could yield seven lakefront lots at almost 80' wide, then with roads and drainage, the remaining land could possibly be divided into 18 interior one half acre lots, this is a concept only and has not been approved. Imagine the potential this type of development could have! It may be possible to seek proper zoning for a lakefront RV park. All information provided must be confirmed by the buyer. **\$2,400,000.** Contact Judd for more information.

Judd
Dickerson

352.516.7809

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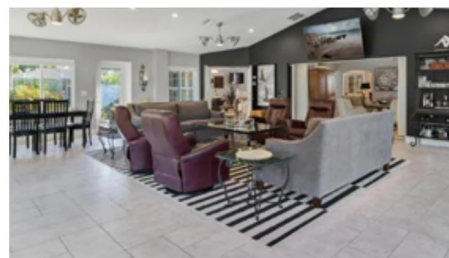
UNDER CONSTRUCTION. New Construction in the highly sought after Hamlin (Horizon West Medical Development. This stunning new building will be coming in January of 2025. Direct Avalon Road frontage with easy access. Orlando Health Horizon West Hospital is only a quarter of a mile away and the new Orlando College of Osteopathic Medicine is approximately one half a mile. Absolute NNN lease with 5-year term minimum. The landlord will contribute \$35 psf for Tenant Improvements. Available units: #110 -3,033 sf #120-1,460 sf, #130-1,300 sf, #140-1,264 sf, #160-1,338 sf. (LEASED) or, contribute adjacent units to fit your needs. **MLS# G5077392 // \$48.00 Per Sq.Ft. Contact Judd for more information.**



BACK ON THE MARKET! This location on the busy corridor SR 44 with over 21,000 vehicles per day and full access to C44-A on the north side. The property is 18.2 acres with approx 615ft of frontage on SR 44. Take advantage of this rare opportunity to own this large of a parcel with such close proximity to The Villages Brownwood Paddock Square. The buyer has the option to complete the currently permitted plaza or create their own mixed use, commercial, medical, retail, etc. Water retention pond was designed for the intended plaza, so all 18.2 acres are compensated for. **\$11,000,000.** Contact Judd for more information.



EXCEPTIONAL GOLF-FRONTAGE POOL HOME ON .72 ACRE!! Welcome home to your next residence that features a NEW ROOF in year 2021 plus a sparkling screened in pool with Hot Tub! Enjoy a spacious FOUR BEDROOM, 2.5 BATHS plus a 33 x 21 3-CAR GARAGE and separate mud room area with sink and extra refrigerator! This expansive lot has 2 beautiful stately Laurel Oaks, 6 Tropical Palms and stunning views of the 18th Fairway on a Championship Golf Course! STOP SEARCHING AND START LIVING...CALL TODAY! **\$625,000.**



STUNNING GOLF FRONTAGE HOME...HALF ACRE! "Welcome Home" to this exceptional residence, located on the 15th Tee and originally built in 1997 to the highest standards and thoughtfully remodeled and transformed into an impressive showpiece! This Golf Course Home offers an unmatched blend of luxury, comfort, and style, perfect for both entertaining and everyday living. You will love the oversized 2 car garage plus a separate Golf Cart Garage! This home offers an OPTIONAL Social and Club membership for a separate fee unlike other homes in this Golf Community!! **\$675,000**



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AMAZING ONE OF A KIND HOME NOW AVAILABLE!!! FIRST TIME EVER ON MARKET! Lovingly and meticulously maintained by the ORIGINAL OWNER! Located on a beautifully landscaped oversized corner lot with convenient circle driveway, this home features a 3/2 split plan, cozy living room with vaulted wood beam ceilings and beautiful wood burning fireplace. Enjoy your own backyard paradise complete with screened-in swimming pool, paver patio, and built in outdoor kitchen grill. The luxurious master suite is complete with a spacious bedroom and large walk in closet, walk in shower, and double vanity set up. Kitchen features plenty of counterspace and storage, with a wonderful 4 seat breakfast bar looking out to the pool area. NEW ROOF IN 2018. **\$489,000**



DEVELOPMENT SITE NOW AVAILABLE IN THE VILLAGES AREA! Site consists of two lots comprising the entire corner of US HWY 441 & SE 156TH PL for a total 2.5 +/- ACRES!! Prime location just north of The Villages, located on busy Highway 441 with median cut & an average daily traffic count of 34,000 per day. Great exposure with 300' of HWY 441 frontage. This site is zoned B-2, which allows a multitude of uses including retail, shopping, center, restaurant, warehouse, office, or hotel. All engineering is completed for a 12,000sf building. Surveys for each parcel & St. John Water Management permit also available for review. **\$749,900.**



VERY ATTRACTIVE AND TURNKEY! 5,300 sq ft professional office space for lease! Most recently occupied by state agency. updated with brand new carpet and paint throughout as well as high speed data lines, LED lighting, PA system that includes white noise, security and fire alarms and the building is fully sprinkled. Space would be ideal for a customer service or call center, institutional, or corporate headquarters. The building also features a kitchen/breakroom area and great parking with easy access. **\$799,000.**



WONDERFUL SPACIOUS home in the much sought after neighborhood of THE GLEN now available! Home features 5 bedrooms, 2.5 baths and a 3 car garage! Spacious rooms throughout and a wonderful open floor plan great for family and friends! The formal dining room comes in handy for the holiday gatherings! Nice backyard and covered porch for the kids to play, and the home's location on a cul de sac is also a plus! Just minutes away from shopping and restaurants! This home is well cared for and has plenty of charm, be sure to schedule your showing right away! **\$360,000.**



FOR LEASE 1,875+/- SQ FT OFFICE/WAREHOUSE unit with 12x12 rollup door for warehouse area. Office area features showroom area, two offices and one restroom. Warehouse area approximately 25x45. Available as soon as needed! Great location with excellent visibility right off SR 44/W Main St in Leesburg adjacent to many business/office parks. Great location to serve The Villages and all of Lake County, as well as easy access to I-75 to the west. Easy terms, well maintained building, and ready for you! **MLS# G5090112 // \$2,400 per mo**



WATERFRONT LAND! Just under 2 acres of picturesque property on "Sunset Lake" in wonderful Fruitland Park Florida. Just minutes from The Villages and under 15 miles to I-75. Nicely located near shopping and Lake Griffin State Park, plus just an hour or so to World Equestrian Center in Ocala to the north, or to Orlando to the south! Total acreage consists of 3 separate lots, which owner will consider selling separately if desired. **MLS# G5089807 // \$260,000.**



13.28 ACRES w/860ft highway frontage on US 27/441, the only 6 Lane Highway through the Villages, Florida. Virtually the only piece of vacant land of this size in the area which is totally on level ground, at roadside eye level. Can be seen from 1000 feet away. City utilities available. St Johns Water Management permit obtained, to expedite build out. Massive billboard highly visible. Likely traffic light at NE corner. Nearly 30,000 vehicles pass daily. Zoned PUD-Industrial with C-2 uses also allowed. **\$3,580,000**

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PEACEFUL LIVING IN LADY LAKE! Embrace the tranquility of this secluded and charming three-bedroom, two-bathroom ranch-style home, nestled on nearly 10 acres. A gated entrance and serene drive leading to the house make this setting irresistible. This fenced and private property offers abundant space for your ranch or farm dreams, boasting a spacious 3-stall barn with a tack room, a detached garage/workshop, a convenient pole barn, and additional carport and storage areas. With limitless possibilities, this property is a dream come true. Conveniently located near The Villages and within an hour's drive to major interstates for effortless travel and commuting, this property offers the ideal blend of proximity to amenities and the serenity of rural living. Experience the best of both worlds – live close enough to enjoy convenience yet far enough to relish peace and quiet. **\$524,900.**

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BEAUTIFULLY REMODELED END-UNIT TOWNHOME IN LEESBURG thoughtfully upgraded for modern living. Fully updated in 2024, this move-in ready home offers peace of mind with a new roof and air conditioning system, both installed in 2024. The home features fresh paint inside and out, new flooring throughout, and contemporary fixtures. A sunroom accessible from both your master bedroom and the kitchen provides a versatile and flexible space. The backyard includes a large shed and a one-car carport for covered parking. Don't miss the opportunity to own this fully remodeled home in a prime location-schedule your showing today! No HOA! **PRICE ADJUSTMENT! \$179,000.**



INTRODUCING THE STUNNING CORPUS CHRISTY MODEL a 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom home with a versatile den that could easily serve as a third bedroom. This property is a true gem, offering an array of desirable features and upgrades. Features include new roof (2021), tankless hot water heater (2017), HVAC (2022). Enjoy the serene acrylic-enclosed lanai complete with tile flooring—ideal for relaxation or entertaining and the outdoor birdcage. **NOBOND!** Located in The Village of Lynnhaven near shopping, golf, and recreation. **\$310,000.**

EXPERIENCE WATERFRONT LIVING AT ITS FINEST IN THIS STUNNING POOL HOME with direct access to the CHAIN OF LAKES. Nestled on **OVER AN ACRE** along Lake Beauclair, this property is free from HOA restrictions and deed limitations, giving you the freedom and space for all your boats, RVs, and other recreational toys. Open floor plan that seamlessly connects the kitchen, living room, and breakfast area. The spacious kitchen boasts a large island, solid wood cabinets. Enjoy beautiful pool views from the kitchen, living room, and breakfast nook, and step through French doors to your expansive pool area. The primary suite is a true retreat, featuring a large bedroom, his-and-hers walk-in closets, and an attached flex space perfect for a nursery, home office, or gym. **\$689,000.**

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SENSATIONAL HOME...AFFORDABLE PRICE! Enjoy this immaculate "move in ready" home feeling safe and secure in a guard gated golf community with sidewalks for your walking pleasure! Enter foyer to a spacious open concept home, "light and bright" with the feeling of the outdoors brought inside. This 3bed/2.5bath home with 2,100sqft is a must see! **\$425,000.**



LOCATED IN A SOUGHT OUT AFTER ALL AGE NEIGHBORHOOD! Home features a popular open concept design with 3bedrooms and 2baths and 1,528 Sqft. The Groves at Harbor Hills is known for its pride of ownership with a lower HOA fee where rentals are limited and optional social and golf memberships are available. **\$312,900.**



POOL HOME...GUARD GATED GOLF COMMUNITY! New Roof coming soon on this Custom-designed home that offers 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, plus a spacious den/office presently being used as a recreation room...This home's timeless split-floor plan features beautiful hardwood and slate flooring, paired with graceful arched entryways. The extended lanai/ pool area is perfect for outdoor relaxation offering scenic views and lots of hedge privacy! The custom-designed solar heated pool is surrounded by slip-resistant decorative tile, making it an ideal oasis for both entertaining and unwinding. **DO NOT HESITATE...CALL TODAY! \$469,000.**



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SETTLE IN TO THIS SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS BEAUTY! Nestled in a quiet and private cul-de-sac, this home is truly a hidden gem. Designed with low-maintenance landscaping, the property requires little to no mowing or upkeep—perfect for stress-free living! 1,248sqft. **\$219,900.**



BEAUTIFULLY MAINTAINED and loved home in the sought after Scottish Highland's community in Leesburg. Two bedrooms, two baths with a separate dining area, 15x14 bonus room and Florida room. Great open feel in this home. Home is move in ready! **\$219,000.**



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS with this three bedroom, two bath home located in the gated, golf community of Harbor Hills To complete this home there is a two-car garage plus golf cart garage. The perfect place to call home.. Light and bright inside, this open feel concept home has a split bedroom layout. The living room/ dining area has high ceiling, crown molding and French doors out to the screened back lanai. **\$349,900.**



EXPERIENCE THE CHARM OF MODERN LIVING

Beautiful brand new home, featuring fresh paint, new fixtures, and sleek vinyl wood flooring throughout. The kitchen is a highlight, offering quartz countertops and premium appliances. Step inside to an open floor plan with vaulted ceilings, creating a spacious and elegant atmosphere. With three comfortable bedrooms and two stylish bathrooms, there's plenty of room for everyone. The master suite, separated from the guest rooms for added privacy, boasts a glass-enclosed shower and dual quartz-topped sinks. Don't miss the opportunity to call this brand-new home your own—schedule a viewing today and start your next chapter in comfort and style. Enjoy peace of mind with the included builder's warranty. **\$339,000.**





THIS 3 BEDROOM 2 BATH HOME features an open floor plan complete with beautiful flooring through out, wood burning fireplace and additional flex space that could make a great at home office off the living area. The large primary suite has a large walk in closet. You will love all the room to roam for your kids or dogs in the large fenced in backyard. Convenient location to both Leesburg and The Villages amenities! NO HOA! **MLS#G5090628 // \$299,900.**

Lauren Fickett

Realtor®

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Lauren@MorrisRealtors.com

Leave It To Lauren!



ONE OF A KIND PROPERTY! Spring fed private lake and 6+ acres! Large living room with double french doors leading to the screened in back patio has a wood burning fireplace, cathedral ceilings and wood panel accent wall. The gorgeous kitchen with updated cabinets, counter tops and beautiful glass tile backsplash overlooks the living and dining area. This home is great for entertaining. ALL but 1 bedroom has stunning lake views. The oversized primary suite features a walk in closet, double sinks, massive updated shower and porch access. Bedroom #2 has it's own private porch overlooking the lake. Split bedroom plan with rooms #3 and #4 which room #3 also has porch access to enjoy the lakeview. Every bedroom has its own mini split ac system. Updated bathroom #2 with a tub/shower combo. New roof in 2022, new windows and updated electrical panels in 2023. WHOLE home 24k Generac generator powered by a 1000 gallon buried propane tank, water filtration system, 300 gallon diesel tank, a 3 HP water pump with 80 gallon holding tank on the well, plus either a 110-50-30 RV hook up. A massive hoop house with electricity and water is onsite. This is every gardeners dream as you walk through all the arch's of vegetables and the planter boxes! Outside of the hoop house is a variety of different fruit trees. Who would not love all the extra storage in not one but TWO huge detached garages. One is located off of the main home and one up near the hoop house and pasture area which is perfect to hold all of your farm equipment. Have a fisherman in your life? They will love the new road system that leads them to their floating composite dock to enjoy catching those large mouth bass! Bring your horses too! This property is fenced. NO HOA! This is one of those properties that you could have everything you want and more! **MLS#G5090998 // \$1,150,000.**



NEW ROOF COMING JANUARY 2025! New AC June 2023. This 3/2 home is located just a few minutes from downtown Tavares and features an open floor plan. You will love the living/kitchen/dining area which is great for entertaining and has beautiful laminate flooring throughout. The kitchen features great counter space, center island and breakfast bar. The backyard is fully fenced. **MLS#G5090625 // \$299,900.**



HOME SWEET HOME! This amazing 3/2 on a cul de sac is the perfect home right off of the 429. This home features a family and living room plus an office area off of the primary suite. Large kitchen with a great amount of cabinet and counter space. Split bedroom plan. 3rd bedroom could be a great in law suite with its own private bath. Screened in back patio and a stunning paved firepit area to enjoy those cool evenings. This location is super convenient. **MLS#G5089518 // \$600,000.**



LOCATION...LOCATION...LOCATION!! Bring your horses to this horse lovers dream property! This gorgeous 12 acre parcel is now available and located just a few minutes to all of The Villages amenities as well as close proximity to the World Equestrian Center. Fully fenced, Well and NO HOA are a few perks to this amazing property. Bring your own builder and start your new dream home here on this ranch! This lot is the one you've been waiting for! **\$400,000.**

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THIS BEAUTIFUL, WELL MAINTAINED HOME HAS EVERYTHING NEEDED Just bring your personal items, a few groceries and you're ready to start living in "sunshine state", or your retirement or second home, look no further than here. Inside utility, large kitchen with lots of light, all appliances, plus dishes, pots, pans small appliances, silverware all the essentials of a kitchen. Master bedroom has large walk-in closet with shelving, master bath with high rise commode, shower with glass doors. Guest bath includes shower, tub combo. **\$169,900.**



GOLF FRONTAGE ...UNIQUE ONE OF A KIND CUSTOM HOME!

Half acre, beautiful park-like setting located on the 11th green! New roof installed in June 2021 and HVAC REPLACED in 2023. Replacement of hot water heater & home re-plumbed in year 2016!! Nestled within a prestigious guard-gated golf community offering 24/7 security, this home welcomes you with a meticulously manicured lawn, majestic oak trees, and an inviting stone pillar entrance with leaded glass double doors. **\$548,200.**

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- Bi-Annual inspection of occupied property

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- Handle complete eviction process
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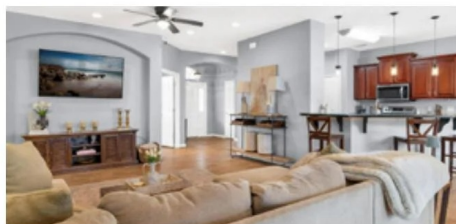
Lena Sells!



EXPERIENCE THE CHARM OF MODERN LIVING in this beautiful brand new home, featuring fresh paint, new fixtures, and sleek vinyl wood flooring throughout. The kitchen is a highlight, offering quartz countertops and premium appliances. Step inside to an open floor plan with vaulted ceilings, creating a spacious and elegant atmosphere. With three comfortable bedrooms and two stylish bathrooms, there's plenty of room for everyone. The master suite, separated from the guest rooms for added privacy, boasts a glass-enclosed shower and dual quartz-topped sinks. Don't miss the opportunity to call this brand-new home your own—schedule a viewing today and start your next chapter in comfort and style. Enjoy peace of mind with the included builder's warranty. **\$339,000.**



LADY LAKE LIVING AT IT'S BEST! Welcome to this stunning three bedroom home in the beautiful Oak Pointe community located in lovely Lady Lake. This custom beauty offers an open and airy floor plan with high-end finishes throughout. The spacious master suite features a tray ceiling, a luxurious en-suite bath with a custom tile shower, double sinks, beautiful granite countertops, and a large walk-in closet. Additional storage includes a linen closet within the master bath. **\$499,900.**



WELCOME HOME TO THIS SILVER LAKE BEAUTY! This home offers 3/2 with a split floorplan and a bonus den/office. Featuring a spacious kitchen with solid surface countertops, cherry cabinets, and a built-in desk area, this home is perfect for both cooking and working from home. The home boasts 9' ceilings, rounded corners, and architectural niches that add character and charm. The large living room opens up to a covered, screened-in porch through French doors, creating a seamless indoor-outdoor living experience. The backyard is privacy fenced. The master suite is a highlight, featuring a custom 7x14 walk-in closet and a spacious master bath with both a separate vanity and a dual-sink vanity. Two generously sized guest bedrooms include one with a walk-in closet, and the guest bath features a relaxing jetted tub. This home also includes a spacious inside utility room with a custom built-in landing nook that is perfect for backpacks or work bags. The oversized garage is spacious enough for storing a fishing boat, and extra concrete on the side of the home provides additional parking space. Located in a convenient area close to shopping, a local college, a dog park, restaurants, and more, this home offers both comfort and convenience. Don't miss the chance to make this wonderful property your new home! **\$365,000.**



START LIVING YOUR LIFE TODAY Harbor Hills Country Club, 3/4 acre lot with no direct rear neighbors. Views of the signature 10th hole as well as a nice, serene pond. Upon entry, you'll find an open floor plan featuring 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, and a welcoming den, providing plenty of room for family and guests. 2-car garage along with an additional golf cart garage. Expansive covered and screened-in patio. Don't miss out on the opportunity to experience ultimate luxury and tranquility. Call today before this one is gone. **\$434,900.**



DON'T MISS THIS ONE! 2/2 plus a bonus room that could easily be an office or den. The master bedroom has an en-suite bathroom with double sinks and a spacious walk-in closet. The guest bathroom features a stand-up bathtub. The kitchen has a nice breakfast bar and space for a table, plenty of cabinets and counter space and flows nicely from the garage making it easy to drop the groceries! Speaking of garage, this side entry garage has a sealed floor and can house two cars! Close proximity to Spanish Springs square and plenty of food and shopping! **\$324,900.**



LAKE PANASOFFKEE BEAUTY!

Nestled on 10 peaceful acres, this charming 2022-built home offers a tranquil retreat surrounded by nature. The property features a fish pond and a marsh at the northern edge, along with beautiful oak trees and abundant wildlife, making it an ideal setting for nature lovers.

\$399,000



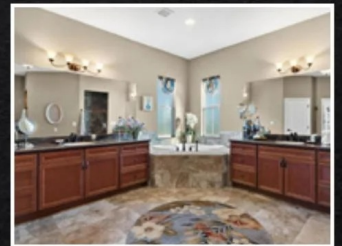
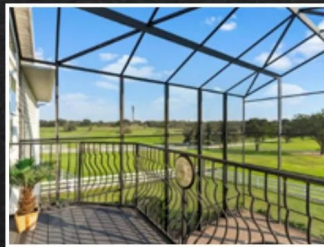
THIS CHARMING HOME FEATURES two spacious bedrooms, one bathroom, and a versatile bonus room. The home includes a convenient laundry and mudroom combination. It boasts a rear courtyard, a detached garage, and a newer roof installed in 2020. **\$225,000**



Equestrian Lovers Dream Home... 17 Acre Estate!

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For more information contact **Theresa Morris** at 352.360.3736 or theresa@morrisrealtors.com



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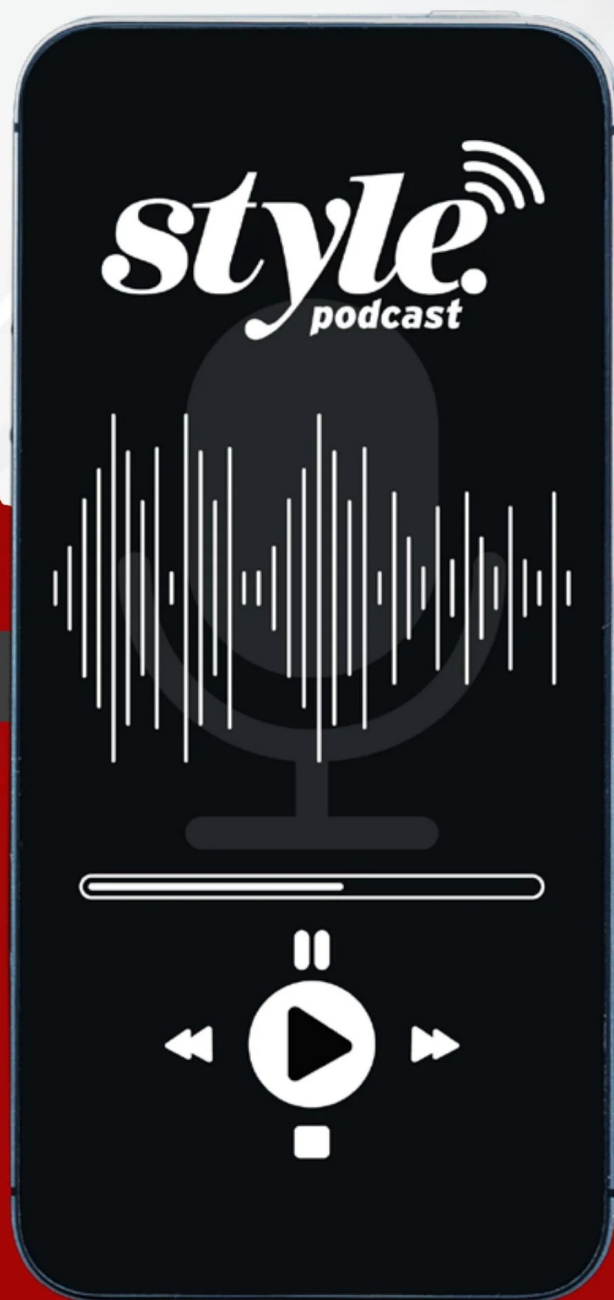
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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR LAKE COUNTY TEACHERS OF THE YEAR FINALISTS!



Jenna Leigh Patrick
Aurelia M. Cole Academy



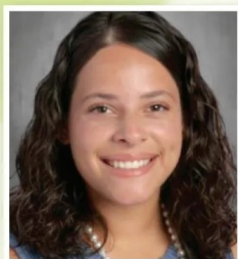
Lisa Bryant
Lake Minneola High



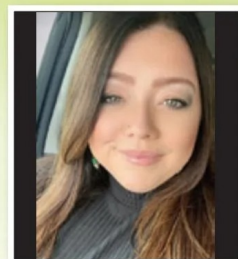
Cynthia Henderson
Treadway Elementary



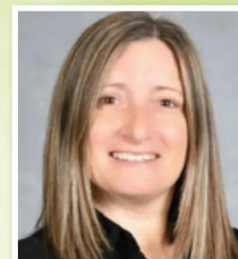
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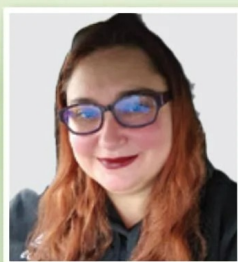
Jessica Hopperton
Winner
Lake County Virtual School



Jennifer Damian
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Sawgrass Bay Elementary



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EXPECTATIONS

No Pressure . . .

Single, taken, somewhere in between? Good thing Valentine's Day isn't one-size-fits-all.

STORY: ROXANNE BROWN

Valentine's Day has long been a celebration for couples—a time for love, affection and romance. Over time though, it kind of feels like the holiday has started to come with all these extra expectations and a bit of pressure to go along with what everyone else is doing.

What was once a more personal, intimate celebration between partners has expanded to include exchanging cards, candies and gifts among parents and children, friends and even coworkers—and, yes, I've done it all! While this can be a sweet way to spread kindness, I can't help but look back at those childhood Valentine's card exchanges at school and realize how little we understood the meaning behind them. We'd dutifully follow a list, with our parents often doing most of the work, handing out cards and treats to every classmate, friend or foe.

However, as adults we should consider a few things. Yes, a special treat can brighten someone's day, but Valentine's Day traditions can also spark mixed feelings. For singles, it may serve as a reminder of their ongoing search for someone special, the loss of a partner or second-guessing personal choices made for independence, growth and peace. Others may be stuck in struggling or unhealthy relationships and the focus on love and romance can inadvertently highlight what feels missing or broken.

Not everyone sees Valentine's Day the same way and that's OK. While it's wonderful to honor love with a partner if both choose to do so, others may prefer to keep February 14 low-key or treat it like any other day.

There's really no right or wrong way to celebrate. But if you choose to share a little love with others through cards, candy or thoughtful gestures, it may be worth being mindful of the recipient's perspective, especially if you don't know them very well. Being

sensitive helps ensure good intentions are received with appreciation.

At its heart, Valentine's Day is about love in all its forms, and though I honestly do enjoy giving and receiving gifts on occasion, for me, the most meaningful expressions often come from simple, heartfelt gestures. Whether it's a quiet moment shared with someone special, a handwritten note, a batch of homemade treats or a memorable experience, these small acts of love can carry profound significance that lasts far beyond the holiday.

That said, how you choose to celebrate—or not celebrate—Valentine's Day is entirely personal. If you want to honor platonic love and connections, creative alternatives to the traditional couple-focused festivities—like Galentine's Day on February 13, Palentine's Day or gatherings with friends anytime throughout February—can be just as special and fun. ☺

Hey, readers! Is there a particular subject that you would like me to write a commentary about? → Tell me, via email, at roxanne@akersmediagroup.com.



ROXANNE BROWN

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